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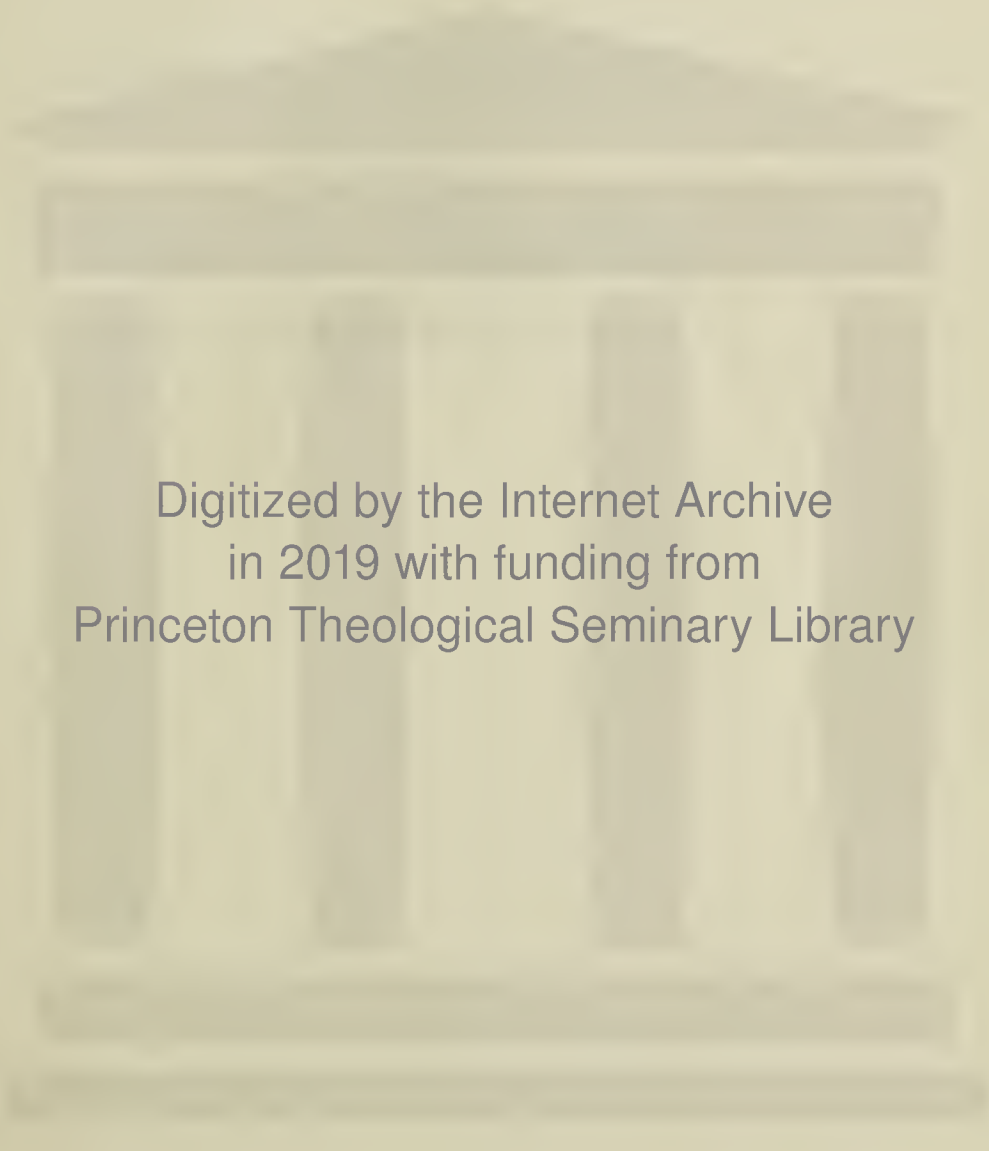

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Twelve Tests of Character

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Twelve Tests of Character

By
Harry Emerson Fosdick

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Foreword

These essays on practical religion and right living were written because the editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal* offered his large circle of readers as an audience. The articles are now printed as a book with no attempt to change their content or style. They doubtless exhibit alike the liberties and the restraints which publication in a popular magazine suggests. Their serial nature also is occasionally indicated as in the eleventh article, which appeared in November and which commemorates Thanksgiving Day. Except as I have retained in the book the original form of articles which editorial necessity compressed when they were published in the *Journal,* I have left the essays practically as they first were printed.

The papers are an endeavor to stress some fundamental tests of character which our new generation is tempted to forget. With many overhead schemes for the world's salvation, everything rests back on integrity and driving power in personal character.

"You cannot carve rotten wood," says a Chinese proverb. Nor can you carve decrepit and decayed character into any economic system or scheme of government that will work happiness for men. It is an old emphasis, but it is indispensable, and just now we may well get back to it.

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK.

New York,
October 1, 1923.

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First Things First

I

A RECENT ride upon a Fifth Avenue bus threatened to waste time. The talk of two women, however, whose conversation was too plainly audible to be escaped, made it well worth while. They were bosom friends, and in an hour's tête-à-tête they gave a comprehensive résumé of their characters.

They loved to play bridge, and they played it, apparently, a good deal of the time. They were gambling at it. To be sure, one of them had had some trouble with her husband, who, having been brought up a Presbyterian, had scruples about gambling. "But," she had said to him, "you see that we must give up the game if we do not gamble." So he had come over just recently. They were all gambling now and were happy. They loved the theater, especially musical comedies. They loved to dance and evidently, when they were not playing bridge, dancing was their chief diver-

sion. They loved their automobile trips, and as for dress, how shall a mere man report their conversation about that? One listened to see if any other interest in life would be revealed, but this was all. Their talk had struck bottom.

These women live in one of the most needy and critical generations in history, when a shaken civilization is striving desperately to get on its feet again, when there are great enterprises to serve, great books to read, great thoughts to think; and yet their lives, like a child's doll, are stuffed with sawdust. They represent in an extreme form one of the commonest failures in character—the crowding out of things that really matter by things that do not matter much. They are absorbingly busy with trivialities. They have missed the primary duty and privilege of life—putting first things first.

The basic facts about us which make such promiscuous preoccupation ruinous is that our life's time and our life's energy are limited. We are like street cars: we can hold our quota and no more; when all seats are taken, the standing room absorbed, and the "Car Full" sign put up in front, whoever hails us next, though he be the most prominent citizen in the community, must be passed by.

It never was so easy to fail in this particular way as it is today. There may have been times when life was sluggish and folk could drift listlessly

through apathetic years. The Bible tells the story of Methuselah's living over nine centuries, but, so far as the record shows, he never did anything or thought anything to make such longevity worth while. If ever life could be dragged out through such dull continuance, that time has gone. Today the currents of life are swift and stimulating, the demands of life absorbing. There are more things to do than we ever shall get done; there are more books to read than we ever can look at; there are more avenues to enjoyment than we ever shall find time to travel. Life appeals to us from innumerable directions, crying, "Attend to me here!" In consequence, we are continually tempted to dabble. We litter up our lives with indiscriminate preoccupation. We let first come be first served, forgetting that the finest things do not crowd. We let the loudest voices fill our ears, forgetting that asses bray, but gentlemen speak low. Multitudes of people are living not bad but frittered lives—split, scattered, uncoördinated. They are like pictures into which a would-be artist has put, in messy disarray, everything that he has chanced to see; like music into which has been hurled, helterskelter, every vagrant melody that strayed into the composer's mind.

Preoccupation is the most common form of failure.

II

Consider, for example, the effect of preoccupation on our reading. Some time ago an airship collapsed above Chicago and dumped itself ruinously down upon a public building. People woke up at that, to see that new inventions like airplanes require special regulation. Now, the printing press is a comparatively new invention. Five hundred years ago there was no such thing. And while it is important that aircraft should not be allowed to empty themselves into our households, it is just as important to consider what the printing press is emptying into our heads.

An entirely new set of problems has arisen since the printing press arrived and reading became one of the dominant influences of human life. When one considers how reading seeps in through all the cracks and crannies of our days, what power there is in books to determine our views of life, and how cheaply these possibilities lie at every man's hand, it is plain that the quality of a man's reading is one of his foremost responsibilities.

It is plain, too, that while a few people deliberately read perversive books, most of us miss the best books, not because we choose the bad but because we litter up our minds with casual trash. We stop to pass the time of day with any printed

vagabond who plucks at our sleeve. We have forgotten Ruskin's exclamation: "Do you know, if you read this, that you cannot read that?"

It is no longer necessary that anybody should plead with us to read. We read enough. "What do you read, my lord?" says Polonius, and Hamlet answers, "Words, words, words." That is a fair description of a great deal of reading in a world which someone has described as "a blur of printed paper."

But how many put first books first? How many would think of saying with Mrs. Browning: "No man can be called friendless when he has God and the companionship of good books"?

To be sure, there are minor kinds of reading of which we all must do more or less. We read for efficiency in daily work. Modern business in every realm, from domestic science to international commerce, has been broken up into an indefinite number of specialties, and books convey to us the results of other men's labors. Any man, to be an adept, must read the specialists. But if a man uses books only so, as Pharaoh might use his slaves to build the pyramid of his success and renown, he does not know what real reading means.

Moreover, we read to keep up with the times—an endless stream of papers, magazines, and books, reflecting every changing situation in this fluid

world, until we are fairly dizzy with the flood of them. And we read the books that are talked about just because they are talked about. Of all social compulsions what is more urgent than the oft-repeated question: "Have you read ——?" That club flogs us to our reading. "What!" says our friend, "you have not read so and so?" Whereupon we fly to the nearest bookstore and against the necessity of conversation at the next dinner we buy a best-seller.

Yet, so continuously reading, we read everything except the books that we should read first of all. The great books habitually are crowded out. The little books that are menially useful to us, our slaves, running errands for us to further our convenience or success, or to dress us in the tinsel of a ready conversation—we read those. But the books that are not slaves, but masters, at whose feet the wise sit to be taught and illumined and inspired—they are crowded out. We should hardly think of saying, as Charles Lamb did, that we should like to say grace over our books; or with Charles Kingsley, "Except a living man, there is nothing more wonderful than a book."

Nevertheless, the great books are waiting for us all. If the world's poets and seers, prophets and apostles were alive, we could hardly meet them one by one, much less talk with them. But in a book

they will come to each of us as though there were no one else in all the world for them to call upon. Though we are so poor that we must have them in paper covers, they will be all there. Though we are so dull that we cannot understand at first, they will repeat the message to us again and again. Though we are so foolish as to forget, they will be there on the morrow to tell it to us once more with tireless patience. Great books are the perfect democrats. The shame of many of us is that, with such books waiting to be read, we stop to barter gossip with every corner loafer on our way. Any vagrant straggler down the literary street can waste our attention and our time. And because time and attention are limited, having read this, we cannot read that.

III

Reading is but one illustration of the way in which habitually the best in life is lost to us by being crowded out. Dean Briggs, of Harvard, describes a company of American young people whom he saw in Rome. They were on their first visit to the Eternal City. Morning after morning they arose with the opportunity of a lifetime awaiting them. The Forum, the Coliseum, Saint Peter's, the whole city, fabulously rich in historical association, was at their disposal. And every day they settled

down in the hotel for a long morning at bridge. Cries Dean Briggs: "What business had such people in Rome? What business had they anywhere?"

So far as our amusements are concerned, this loss of the best, through the preposterous cramming of our lives with wastage, is the more common because the old Puritanical attitude against popular recreations has gone to pieces. Fortunately we can only with difficulty imagine ourselves back in the time when drama had to be presented, if it was to be presented at all, under the guise of a free extra, interspersed between the musical numbers of a concert. In Portland, Maine, on July 4, 1820, the following advertisement appeared in the public press:

"The public are respectfully informed that there will be a Concert of vocal and instrumental music this evening. Between the parts of the Concert there will be performed *(gratis)* a celebrated Play in three acts called The Point of Honor. To conclude with Shakespeare's admired farce in three acts *(gratis)* called Katherine and Petruchio."

That day happily has gone. Concerning popular recreations which were once under a rigid interdict, most of us have come to the conclusion voiced by the late President Hyde, of Bowdoin, that they are altogether too good to be monopolized by the devil. Plenty of folk, however, having decided concerning popular amusements that they are right,

forget that there is still a further question to be faced: how much time and attention do they deserve?

"Mr. Jones," said an effusive youth, "is the most wonderful man I ever knew. He remembered every card that I held at bridge last week!" To which a girl with a level head answered: "Has it ever occurred to you that Mr. Jones is forty-five years old, and that he doesn't know anything else?" The trouble with Mr. Jones is one of our commonest maladies. If one wishes to describe the disease in prose, one may say that in a world where the span of life is short, the energy of life limited, the needs of men appalling, the finest privileges of life enriching, Mr. Jones is making an ineffable fool of himself with trivial preoccupation. If one wishes the same truth stated in poetry, probably Emerson has succeeded best:

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleachèd garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

IV

The seriousness of this problem involved in putting first things first is not, however, adequately represented by folk like Mr. Jones or the young people in Rome or the chatterers on the Fifth Avenue bus. A young lad in Brooklyn was almost given up in despair by his mother because he seemed addicted to trash, enjoying nothing so much as cheap cigarettes to smoke and cheap tales to read. Then a librarian got hold of him. "What do you like to read?" he asked.

"Detective stories."

"Have you ever read Thomas Bailey Aldrich's 'The Story of a Bad Boy'? It is one of the best detective stories ever written," said the librarian.

So the boy took the book home and, retaining it a week longer than he usually kept books, returned it, saying: "That is the best book I ever read. Got any more?"

The librarian was also a field lecturer in geology, and along with feeding the boy better and better books, he persuaded him to go on a field trip with his class. At the foot of the Palisades he began telling about the leisureliness of God laying the foundation of the earth, when he saw the boy, legs apart, arms akimbo, eyes protruding with amazed interest.

Going home the lad sidled up to him. "I never heard anything like that in all my life. Are there any books about it?"

So he began reading geology and, to make a long story short, that lad, once absorbed in trash, is now professor of geology in a great university.

The tragedy of preoccupation, however, is often caused, not by flippant triviality, but by life's ordinary and necessary business. The cause of alarm about Niagara Falls has been simply that business has been drawing off a little stream here and another little stream there until through many small dispersions the cataract which the Indians called "Thundering Water" may in the end leave only bare and ugly rock.

Business is doing that to people as well as to Niagara. The problem may be intensified in modern times, but it is not new. The Greeks had a proverb, "Zeus frowns upon the overbusy." The Master himself told a story about men who, being absorbed in a farm, in a newly purchased team of oxen or in a freshly established home, missed the greatest opportunity of their lives.

The consequences of this sort of preoccupation are often pathetic. An American once stormed through one of the great European galleries of art. He sniffed at this picture an instant; he sniffed an instant at that; and then he stormed out. But

before he went he turned on the venerable attendant at the door and said: "Not a thing here worth seeing—not a thing!"

To which the attendant replied, "If you please, sir, these pictures are no longer on trial—the spectators are."

That dull-eyed visitor doubtless was a very busy man. He had started with normal capacities to appreciate the finest gifts of life, but, preoccupied with many tasks, he had lost through atrophy the power to love the highest when he saw it.

One result of this absorbing material business, which so crowds out attention to the things of the spirit, is the appalling vulgarity of our personal and public life. We forget that, while we may not be able to create those forms of beauty which will last forever, we have another ability which is almost as wonderful: we can love them when they are created; we can rejoice in them and grow rich because of them. So Browning makes his Cleon say:

I have not chanted verse like Homer, no—
Nor swept string like Terpander, no—nor carved
And painted men like Phidias and his friend;
I am not great as they are, point by point.
But I have entered into sympathy
With these four, running these into one soul,
Who, separate, ignored each other's art.
Say, is it nothing that I know them all?

We do not deliberately decide to lose all this beauty from our lives—the best books, the best music, the best art; we are simply busy. There are so many other things which press upon us with urgent clamor to be done that we let the best things go. In the end, for all the money that we make, we are like the Mohammedan beggars on the steps of St. Sophia in Constantinople, standing with their backs to the great mosque, careless of its history, its symbolism, its beauty, crying "Baksheesh! Baksheesh!"

V

The climax of this test's application concerns a deeper matter than the lost esthetic values in which excessive busyness results. It concerns some of our lost moral and religious values. The problem of the family, for example, would be in a fair way toward solution if fathers and mothers would once more put first things first in their relationships with their children.

One of the troubles with this much berated younger generation is not primarily with this younger generation at all, but with the older generation. The younger generation does not so much need critics as it needs examples. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Boy Scouts will take me up"—such is the rendering given to an

ancient Psalm by an observant watcher of our family life. For fathers and mothers, preoccupied with many tasks, have farmed their children out to any agency, from school and scout troop to a summer camp, where they can be rid of their responsibility. They use these helps, not as helps, but as substitutes for the family life.

A father, whose son had been dropped from several schools and colleges and who confessed that he knew nothing whatever about the boy, recently took him to another college and demanded that, as a *quid pro quo* for money given, that institution should assume the problem of his son. "I am a very busy man," he said, "and I have no time to attend to him."

The trouble with that father is not lack of time. He has time to do those things which he considers essential. His difficulty is that he thinks some things are more important than caring about his son, that some entrustments are more sacred than that.

Once, in the gray of a winter dawn, an early riser watched a stooped and aged woman groping about a building in process of construction, picking up bits of lath and sawed-off ends of lumber. It was a pathetic sight to see a woman reduced to the offscourings of the wood for fire to warm her household. But even more pathetic is it to see the finest relationships of human life, our friends, our fam-

ilies, and at last our God, seeking around the main business of our days for the scraps and left-overs of our attention. We give the logwood of our life to secondary matters; to the highest we give the chips.

More than anything else one suspects that this is at the root of irreligion. It is not skepticism, but preoccupation, which generally makes the innermost relationships of a man's soul with God of no account. The highest is in us all. At times it flames up and we know that we are not dust but spirit, and that in fellowship with the Spiritual Life, from whom we came, is our power and our peace. But many a man who has known the meaning and the might of this relationship has largely lost it, not because theoretically he has disbelieved, but because practically he has crowded it out.

"Sometime," the man says, "I will attend to these deepest and finest relationships."

Meanwhile he picks up his life as a football runner does the ball and speeds across the field. He does not notice the ground across which he runs; his eyes are set upon the goal. He has no present; he has only a future. The most enriching relationships of life, from family love and friendship to religious faith, offer their best to him, but he runs by. "Sometime," he says.

That time never comes; it never will come. What he needs most to learn is that the days are not a

football field to be run over, but gardens to be tilled, and that, if tilled well, they can grow now the things of which heaven is made. "*Carpe diem*," said the Latins—"Seize the day." Some people who for many years have been doing the opposite, crowding out the best by preoccupation and postponement, might well begin a new year with the single resolution to put first things first.

For the ultimate trouble with preoccupation is that it takes no account of the flight of time. Someone has figured human life as covering the span of a single day's waking hours from six in the morning until ten at night. Then if a man is twenty years old, it is ten o'clock in the morning with him; if he is thirty, it is high noon; if he is forty, it is two in the afternoon; if he is sixty, it is six in the evening. So the day passes and the enriching experiences which fellowship with the Highest offers us are lost, not because we deliberately discard them, but because our time and attention are preëngaged.

The famous Bargello portrait of Dante was lost for years. Men knew there was such a portrait, but they did not know where it was. Then an artist, resolved on finding it, started his search with the room where tradition had located it. The room was a storehouse for wastage; straw and lumber littered the floor and whitewash covered the walls. But

when the rubbish had been carted out and the whitewash was being removed, old lines long obscured began to appear and colors long hidden became visible, until at last the grave, lofty, noble face of the great poet was recovered for the world. Nobody had destroyed the Bargello portrait, but somebody had littered it up. Straw and lumber and whitewash had seemed to somebody more important than the face.

Long Ropes and Strong Stakes

I

HENRY WARD BEECHER, so we are told, would often work out an idea through a long course of abstract argument until suddenly his thought took fire and blazed out in a simile or metaphor. Then the wise preacher would draw his pencil through the laborious disquisition, and all that the people ever got was a flaming picture. One suspects that Isaiah had gone through some such procedure when, having long brooded over the estate of his people, he flashed out his vision of their need: "Lengthen your ropes and strengthen your stakes." Any camper acquainted with tents recognizes the figure. When you pitch a tent, if you do lengthen the ropes you must strengthen the stakes.

One does not have to look far in modern life to discover examples of such increased extension calling for increased stability. A prominent business man recently went to pieces in a collapse of

character that astonished his friends. He had all the typical modern virtues—energy, forcefulness, vigor, the aggressive ability to put things across. But he lacked moral stability. Evidently his activity had been stretched at the expense of his steadiness. He was living an overextended life. Like a tipsy tent, he had long ropes and weak stakes.

Mark Twain said once, "If I were a heathen, I would rear a statue to Energy, and fall down and worship it." That is entirely characteristic of the modern age. Think of the words which our generation's attitudes naturally suggest. They are all words of action. Aggressive, progressive, dynamic, vigorous—such words are applicable to our time. But who, describing our modernity, would ever think of words like these: poise, balance, peace, steadfastness, stability? Yet anyone who knows either biography or history must see that one of the primary tests of character is the ability to increase staunchness as you extend strain. Man's life is like a tree. Branches demand roots; every increase in the superstructure, giving purchase for the wind to get hold upon, requires a new grip on the steadfast earth.

Some of the most lamentable collapses in history have taken place in overextended lives which neglected this elemental necessity. Francis Bacon, for example, had one of the most useful and able minds

ever entrusted to a man. When he was scarcely fifteen years old, the great thought took possession of him that the ancient method of studying nature was wrong and that he was meant to right it. The spirit in which he went about that work, the results of which have put the world eternally in his debt, is fairly indicated by a memorandum written in his early forties and never intended for publicity: "Believing that I was born for the service of mankind, and regarding the care of the commonwealth as a kind of common property, which, like the air and the water, belongs to everybody, I set myself to consider in what way mankind might best be served, and what service I was myself best fitted by nature to perform." Moreover, he had moral insight of a high order, as is shown by his essays, which still remain classic in the literature of ethics. His life was not blameless, but he probably would have lived and died in respectability had it not been for his advancement in power. He was made Lord Chancellor of England. He was created Viscount St. Albans. He moved out into an extended opportunity and became, not only the most learned man in the empire, but also one of the most powerful. And then he fell. Convicted of gross bribery and financial corruption, to which he abjectly confessed, he lived his last five years a disgraced man.

The length of his ropes got beyond the strength of his stakes.

Countless similar stories bear witness to the fact that man's life is built, like a Gothic cathedral, on the principle of balanced thrusts. Every new arch must be braced with a new foundation. Lifting the altitude or spreading the expanse of the nave requires stronger supporting walls or flying buttresses. Each outthrust calls for an inthrust. And the difficulty in our expansive modern life lies here: ever achieving new powers, enlarging our opportunities, widening our liberties and everywhere complicating our lives, we forget that, unless we correspondingly strengthen our moral and spiritual foundations, the whole overextended superstructure will come down about our ears, as did the old Philistine banquet hall when Samson broke the pillars.

II

A vivid illustration of the truth which we are driving at is presented in our modern young people. They are enjoying a greatly extended freedom, to balance which they have not yet achieved a stabilizing self-control. Young people used to be under artificial, external restraint. Even though, as Ruskin said, Sunday did cast a "lurid shade" two

days in advance, they had to go through it. They may not have been saints above the present representatives of youth, but they were compelled, the girls especially, by the strict canons of the social code, to act more as though they were. Parental authority was still in vogue and, while fathers and mothers were probably no wiser than they are now, their *ipse dixit* had more weight and drive in it when they assumed the purple and played the autocrat.

In this last generation these external restraints have been giving way at an accelerating rate. Let us hasten to rejoice in it! A visit to the Far East should encourage our wavering faith in the general soundness of our Western methods of treating youth. The whole Asiatic tradition is on the side of solving youth's problems, and especially the problem of relationship between the sexes, by seclusion and repression. In an old-fashioned Chinese home, the girl from her twelfth year on did not go outside her father's house until she went to her husband's, and a Japanese girl when grown could say that she had never come so near a man, even her own brother, as to touch his hand.

We in the West are trying the opposite method. Our young people are the freemen of history—the most unsecluded, unsuppressed, unsuperintended youth of all time. Our ideal is to train them in

individual initiative, to develop independent judgment and control, to throw them on their own resources—which is excellent when they have the resources! But many of them are making unmitigated nuisances of themselves because the length of their freedom has got away beyond the strength of their self-control. An unchaperoned group of girls, supposedly from "our best families," recently went with a publicly organized party on a European tour. During the entire trip they drank to excess, they smoked to excess, and their personal immodesty became a scandal to the party. They were enjoying a degree of liberty never before accorded to young women, and they were betraying their utter inability to handle it. Granting the social restraints of even a generation ago, those same girls probably would be decent, modest, self-respecting young women. As it is, their lengthened ropes have betrayed their weak stakes and their tents are wildly flapping in the wind.

If, therefore, one had a chance to broadcast a message which all young people would hear, one might well choose some such theme as this: real freedom never consists in mere release from old restraints.

A young tree set out in a city's park with an iron cage around it for support may well resent the humiliation of that external curb, but if all the freedom which the tree seeks is release from that en-

cumbrance it will discover that the only freedom which it has achieved is freedom to fall over when the wind blows. The first step toward real freedom for that tree is to grow deep roots of its own on which it can depend. Freedom never is obtained by mere release from old limitations; freedom is the positive substitution of inward self-control for external restraints.

This unlearned truth has cost the race some stiff experiences. The first warriors for democracy, for example, were tempted to believe that they would be free if only they could slay the tyrant and overturn the throne on which so long and so oppressively he had been sitting. They had to learn that they could behead Louis XVI and get Robespierre in his place. They have just been learning that they can shoot the Czar and get Lenine and Trotzky instead. Freedom in the state does not consist alone in making a tyrant stop taking charge of the people; it consists in the intelligent ability of the people to take charge of themselves. Real democracy was not won when kings went; real democracy is still to be won. The facts which our incipient, embryonic democracy must face are more staggering than the old tyrants were—for example, that at the last presidential election almost twenty-eight million people who were qualified to vote did not exercise that privilege; that an accredited esti-

mate is possibly true that in the United States four million people are living in destitution. The question now is not whether a tyrant shall continue to control us; the question is whether the people will prove able profitably to control themselves. That is always the ultimate question in any campaign for freedom. And the youth of this generation need very much to learn it.

This is no sweeping indictment of our young people. The criticisms hurled against them are often frantic and extreme. Many of the critics forget their own youth; many others mistake superficial eddies for main currents; many others, seeing rightly the wayward wildness of some of the younger generation, fail to see the splendid spirit of the rest of them. They take no note of the sacrificial devotion with which some youths are taking this chaotic, bloody world from the hands of the older generation in the hope of making something out of it. But when all such allowance has been made, a serious problem remains.

There are altogether too many of our young people who, in expansion of their freedom, have passed the limit. Their staunchness is not equal to the strain.

III

In another way this same test of character is illustrated in the expansion of the powers and privileges of modern women. The gaining of this amplified life for womanhood has been a great fight. Even equality with men before the law has been denied women in our Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence up to our own generation. Today we are debating the problem of equal pay for equal work; two centuries ago women were vainly desiring equal punishment for equal crime.

Even today the law does not recognize the misconduct of a husband as equally culpable with the misconduct of a wife. Indeed, no woman in England ever protested publicly and legally against her husband's infidelity until 1801 and there were only three cases up to 1840 where a wife took the initiative in suit for divorce. Until 1857, in England, a woman when she married relinquished all property of her own, even her daily earnings if she worked, into the absolute control of her husband. No revolution in human history is more important than the emancipation of womanhood from such serfdom to her present independence.

She has won the right to be educated. It was not easy to win. Mary Somerville, overcoming, as her daughter says, "obstacles apparently insurmount-

able, at a time when women were well-nigh totally debarred from education"; Charlotte Bronté, writing in secret and publishing under a pseudonym because only so could she hope for just criticism; Harriet Hunt, admitted to the Harvard Medical School in 1850 but forced out by the enraged students; Elizabeth Blackwell, applying to twelve medical schools before she could secure admission, and meeting with insult and contumely in her endeavor to study and practice medicine; Mary Lyon, treated as a wild fanatic because she wanted American girls to be educated—such figures are typical in woman's struggle for intellectual opportunity. It has been a great fight and the victory is almost contemporary.

Difficult, too, has been woman's struggle for the right to work. For while men for a long time have been entirely willing that women should scrub their office stairs, only recently have they become willing that women should be lawyers, physicians, ministers and merchants. As for political equality, Charles Fox said in 1797: "It has never been suggested in all the theories and projects of the most absurd speculation, that it would be advisable to extend the elective suffrage to the female sex."

A typical modern woman glories in this expanded life which has come to womanhood from this fourfold struggle for legal, educational, occupa-

tional, and political freedom. There is occasion here, however, for something besides jubilation. One need not be reactionary to see that these lengthened ropes are pulling on the stakes. Many women of this new generation are not profiting at all by their enlarged privilege; they are simply exhibiting their lack of balance in handling it. The desirable solution does not lie in shortening the ropes, but it does lie in strengthening the stakes. After a long and successful battle for expanded opportunity, modern womanhood needs reëmphasis upon the spiritual factors which make not so much for extension as for depth. Unless we can get out of the new system motherhood as consecrated, spiritual quality as fine, idealism as exalted, religious faith as cleansing and ennobling as distinguished previous generations, the new system will have failed in its most important object.

IV

All history is a running commentary upon the danger of an overextended life. As one watches the advance of civilization he can observe two processes in continual operation. The first is expansion. Florescent days come in history when new ideals light men's minds and new achievements crown their endeavors—as when the new astronomy en-

larged the universe, or when Columbus and his fellow pioneers opened new continents to the imagination and use of mankind, or when the new science began putting into man's hands mastery over the world's latent resources. Such periods of expansion amplify our lives and enlarge their opportunities.

Always, however, a second process—not expansion but consolidation—must be close behind when this new outreaching of life threatens to overextend itself and end in ruin. In the business world, for example, the wonder is not that discord and wrong so prevail. The marvel is that the human mind and will have developed sufficiently to run our modern business at all.

Just after the Revolutionary War, John Marshall described the American nation as "an infant people, spreading themselves through a wilderness occupied only by savages and wild beasts." The life of a merchant prince or financier of those early days must have been comparatively simple. No steam-driven machines, no telephone, telegraph or wireless, no organized labor, no fluctuating foreign exchange, and the other side of the ocean so far away that Thomas Jefferson could hope that Europe would never have more to do with us than with China! How we have lengthened our ropes since then! Many a modern business man as a matter of course now carries responsibilities so great

that in comparison an ancient emperor would look like a small retail merchant on a side street.

In consequence, the immediate need of our business life is not more extended activity but more fundamental morality. So, in a military operation, the charge may be enthusiastically pushed and new ground gained rapidly until the commanders become worried about their very success. The process of advance may be carried perilously far. The time comes when the men must dig in, the lines must be consolidated, the communications with the base must be reëstablished, the commissariat must be brought up.

V

By this new world of complicated relationships the lives of all of us are encompassed. Multitudes of people are habitually stretched to their utmost to meet its demands. Most of us are living under a strain that human nature never was intended to bear. The resultant need is evident. Long emphasis upon expansion must be matched by renewed emphasis upon those spiritual forces which stabilize and fortify men, confirm them in self-control, build moral foundations under them, give tenacity to meet tension and steadfastness to meet strain.

And among all such forces there is nothing to compare with real religion.

Why is it, for example, that whenever in recent years books like Wagner's "The Simple Life" or Cabot's "What Men Live By" have been published the sale has been phenomenal? Is it not because there is something the matter with us in the realm in which such books move?

We are energetic, forceful, vigorous, progressive. But we are also distracted, harassed, perplexed, overstrained, restless. Our excessive activity runs to froth and fume. We lack adequate spiritual reserves, and it never can be well with us until we find them.

Peace, for example, in its personal meaning, is a word which is not only inapplicable to modern life but is even distasteful to modern ears. Like Mark Twain we would erect an altar to Energy, but hardly to Peace. But no person or generation can in the end afford to take that attitude. Peacelessness is the symptom of a deadly malady, for it is the sign of powerlessness. It springs from the lack of adequate resources. Find a man, for example, who is worried about his business and you will probably discover that he has overextended himself. When credit is easy his business grows rapidly, but with stringency in the money market and credit tight he discovers that he is not ready for an emergency. Of course he is anxious; anxiety is due to insufficient power in reserve. It is nervous busi-

ness trying to live in a tent whose ropes are long and whose stakes are weak.

Peace, on the other hand, is one of the supreme, positive achievements of the human spirit, because it means the possession of adequate resources. Peace in daily work is the consciousness of health and ability to spare so that when one's tasks are done there is a margin all around. Peace in business is the consciousness of capital in plenty, so that one need not fear what the day may bring. Peace in the family is the consciousness that, under all the strains inevitably incident to the running of a home, there is an unfailing wealth of love and devotion and fidelity to fall back upon. Peace in the soul is the consciousness that, however difficult life may be, we are not living it alone, that above and beneath and around us are the resources of the Eternal Spirit, that we can depend upon the reality, nearness and availability of the Unseen Friend.

In this age of overextended activity, our streets are thronged with people whose fundamental need is such spiritual underpinning, and whatever else it may be the function of religion at its best to provide, it certainly is the business of religion to provide that. In the last analysis nothing except a deep and downright faith in God can provide that. We all have read those books of Mark Twain which so have added to the merriment of nations, but it

would be profitable at least once to read Mark Twain's final summary of life's meaning, his deliberate and well-considered statement of mankind's significance upon this earth:

"A myriad of men are born; they labor and sweat and struggle for bread; they squabble and scold and fight; they scramble for little mean advantages over each other; age creeps upon them; infirmities follow; shames and humiliations bring down their prides and their vanities; those they love are taken from them, and the joy of life is turned to aching grief. The burden of pain, care, misery grows heavier year by year; at length ambition is dead; pride is dead; vanity is dead; longing for release is in their place. It comes at last—the only unpoisoned gift earth ever had for them—and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence, where they achieved nothing, where they were a mistake and a failure and a foolishness; where they have left no sign that they have existed—a world which will lament them a day and forget them forever."

Endeavoring to explain these words upon the lips of such a man as Mark Twain, one cannot say that Mark Twain had a melancholy temperament, for he made the whole world laugh. One cannot say that Mark Twain lacked moral quality and courage, for he did not. He was a robust, vigorous, admirable man. One of the finest deeds in the annals of financial integrity is Mark Twain's voluntary shouldering of a debt of honor and his paying of

it at the cost of infinite labor. Nor can one say that Mark Twain did not have at his disposal all that modern knowledge could tell him. But Mark Twain had utterly lost his religious faith. He had concluded that the ultimate reality is physical and nothing more. He had decided that when humanity has finished its course on this earth, it will all have been, as another phrased it, " a brief and discreditable episode on one of the minor planets." That materialistic philosophy knocked the foundations out. For spiritual stability that can stand the strain of life's toil and the shock of life's tragedy and bring a man out inwardly victorious over disappointment and disillusion is to be found ultimately in a clear religious insight that

. . . This world's no blot for us
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good.

Granted all that is to be said against the type of religion that is popularly presented in our day, the fact remains that what we need most is more religion of a better kind. This twentieth century is desperately in need of stabilizing forces, and in personal character one of the primary tests is the ability to realize in experience an ideal presented long ago: "Everyone therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock."

A High Opinion of Oneself

I

EVERY right-minded person feels horrified at the banditry which has disgraced our cities since the war. When one stops to analyze the reason why we feel that horror the explanation is clear. The bandits have exhibited a type of character in whose eyes little, if anything, is sacred. Human life itself is not sacred—they murder for a song. Truth is not sacred—they lie with ease. Friendship is not sacred—they betray their own without a qualm.

In what sharp contrast, on the other hand, stand the men who respect life's sanctities. An old Edinburgh weaver used habitually to pray, "O God, help me to hold a high opinion of myself." One imagines behind that Scotchman's life such a home as Burns described in "The Cotter's Saturday Night," where the profound meanings of religion and right living were bred into the very marrow of the children. And this was the practical issue in the

weaver's case—he felt in his life things too valuable to be misused, too fine to be profaned, and, remembering them, he held a high opinion of himself.

Every admirable character in history can be interpreted in terms of such lofty self-respect. If Joseph resists the solicitations of impurity, it is because he thinks that his honor is sacred. If the three hundred at Thermopylæ withstand with rememberable courage the assault of the Persians, it is because they think that their loyalty is sacred. If martyrs have gone to the stake rather than lie, it is because they have believed that their truth is sacred. Spinoza, the philosopher, lived long ago in Holland, and ground and polished lenses for a living while he thought great thoughts of God. Louis XIV offered him pension and patronage if he would dedicate even one book to His Majesty. But Spinoza did not approve of Louis XIV, and so he continued to polish lenses and to live with his thoughts. He had a high opinion of himself. A prelate in New Zealand was warned by the authorities in England that if he persisted in his course they would cut down his salary. "You can get very good fish here in the bay," he wrote back, "and I know a place in the woods where you can dig up roots that you can eat." Plainly he had a high opinion of himself.

No training of children matters much that does

not put at the center of their lives such self-esteem. Rules and regulations are necessary, admonitions and rebukes, and all the fallible machinery by which a household is run. But the one abiding service which a fine home can do the children is to put deep into the grain of them the consciousness that in themselves is something sacred, rather than violate which they would better die. "Taste," said Ruskin, "is the only morality." Understand "taste" deeply enough and that is true. All parents know that the time will come when the external supports which they have built up around their children will fall away and the particular admonitions which they have given will be forgotten. But perhaps the home will have given the children something deeper, a sure and sensitive taste which loves good and shrinks from evil, which feels instinctively that life's spiritual values, its purities and fidelities and truths, are too fine to be profaned.

It is for this reason that the mere denunciation of our young people, thundering against them and calling down upon them the penalties of the moral law, does so little good. Undoubtedly the penalties of the moral law are terrific, and our modern cleverness will not evade them. A bullet may leap from the rifle's mouth crying "What care I for gravitation? I will go as I will!" For all its speed, however, it will not beat out gravitation in the end.

Gravitation never lets go. It hangs on tremendously. Sooner or later that bullet will come down. So our moral wildness will never escape the moral law. But strenuous insistence on that fact does not cure the situation. The deeper trouble with all of us, both older and younger, is not that we lack knowledge of external penalties, but that we lack a fine sense of inward sanctities. If a violin had been made in the first place by Antonio Stradivari himself and if skilled hands had played upon it the compositions of the masters, any cheap endeavor to make it hiccup with syncopated jazz would be resented. The violin would be ashamed. That quick sense of possessing in ourselves something inwardly fine that must not be desecrated is essential to great character. It is one of the supreme gifts that any home can give to its children. It is generally caught by contagion, not taught by admonition. It is instinctive self-respect—the resistance of a man who holds a high opinion of himself against the profanation of his holy things.

Ex-President Eliot, of Harvard, says that the strongest appeal that he was ever able to bring to bear on wayward boys consisted in making clear to them how much they had been sacrificed for and how much their failure would mean to those who cared. If we seek an explanation of that motive's power we must start with the fact that when anything

is sacrificed for, from a battle-flag to a boy, it gains sacredness. One feels that it ought not to be desecrated. Get any boy vitally to recognize that he is the object of sacrifice and what you have done is to lift his own opinion of his worth. Every man who has had a great mother understands that long after her special words have been forgotten her abiding influence continues in an immeasurable heightening of life's sacredness. To have been the object of such love is to become too valuable to waste.

Dr. Eliot really was appealing to the motive of the Cross; he was sending those boys away saying to themselves, whether they ever put it into words or not, "I have been sacrificed for, and my life is worth too much to throw away."

All great teachers and all great parents have relied upon that method of producing character. They have not lifted human quality primarily by thundering against sin; they have lifted it by heightening the positive conception of life's dignity and value. Professor Gilbert Murray, of Oxford, says that once he took up a copy of Macbeth which had belonged to Andrew Bradley, the Shaksperean scholar, and he read in it a scene which he knew almost by heart and which he had supposed that he understood. But he adds that as he read Bradley's penciled notes on the margin he discovered

that he had been missing about half a dozen points on every page. The spiritual seers have had that effect upon their fellows; they have disclosed in the familiar passages of human life significant values that were being missed. Because of their insight men have seen that life is finer and more meaningful than they had supposed. To have friends whose lives we can elevate or depress by our influence is sacred. To be entrusted with little children is sacred. To have powers by which we can make this earth a more decent place is sacred. To be a child of God is sacred. And honor, honesty, truthfulness, fidelity, and love are sacred. Such is the insight by the leverage of which the spiritual seers have lifted men, and by which high-minded parents have trained high-minded children. For when any one vitally believes that anything is sacred he will shrink from sacrilege.

II

The need of such self-respect in modern life is not far to seek. There used to be a barn on the crest of the Chautauqua hills so placed that its ridge-pole was a watershed between two great river systems. For the drops of rain which fell upon one side flowed into Lake Erie and so out, by the St. Lawrence River, into the Atlantic, and the drops

which fell upon the other side flowed into Lake Chautauqua and so out, by the Ohio River and the Mississippi, to the Gulf of Mexico. With what fascination we boys used to watch it rain on that roof and to wonder at the far-sundered destinies of the drops which fell so near together!

Such a decisive element in character is this matter of self-respect. To have it in good working order and at one's disposal on short notice is generally the determining factor in a man's life. When a ship goes down at sea there is no time to argue out the pros and cons of right action. If a man lets women and children go first it is because something in him, call it what you will, a sense of honor, self-respect, rises up imperatively to decide the matter without debate. Only those men get through life unscathed by dishonor in whom self-respect is ingrained.

The sin of age is cool, shrewd, calculating; the sin of youth is passionate, tumultuous and swift. It is committed with headlong impetuosity. The life is smirched, defiled, it may be ruined, before there has been time to think. Temptations swoop down on youth with stormy suddenness. Restraints like fear of consequence are swept aside. So far as ill result is concerned, the youth longs to run the Jolly Roger to the masthead and sail in. Only one thing will save him from disaster. It may be that

there is in him a sense of honor, a quick consciousness of something which must not be desecrated. All the fine influences that have played upon his life have helped to put it there. His home, his best friends, his hours of serious thought and reading, his worship in the church, his inward prayers—such influences have deposited in him this saving core of character. Driven back he may be through all his outward defenses, but his victory lies at last in that inextinguishable resentment against sacrilege which rises up even at the last moment to cry "No, before God—not that!"

One of the finest expressions of this spirit ever given us is contained in a single verse of Tennyson's ascription to the Queen: "O Loyal to the royal in thyself." All greatness in character is associated with that. As one considers its implications one is inclined to think that all of ethics and an important part of religion are contained in it—"Loyal to the royal in thyself."

III

One field where this test of character has clear application is the relationship between the sexes. The modern age has become obsessed by the idea that the cure of our ills is to be found in the spread of biological information. Out of an old-fashioned

reticence which, while not afraid to call a spade a spade, did by common consent leave some spades undiscussed, we have come into an age when we discuss everything publicly, not to say blatantly. "If only our young people were properly informed," we have said, "all would be right." Well, our contemporary young people do certainly seem to be informed. They seem to know everything that there is to know on the matter of sex. But it is an open question how much solid improvement has come in consequence.

This is no plea for the policy of hush. Ignorance is no cure for anything. God at creation said "Let there be light," and he has never created anything since without that introductory word. The sunlight of wholesome knowledge can disperse the fogs of morbid curiosity and misinformation, and all movements to bring that about are salutary. Parents who do not themselves take this responsibility with their own children are sinners against society. But that truth is no excuse for what is happening today.

A supposedly intelligent woman who prides herself on her progressiveness went to see a drama that would have tickled Nero's fancy to a T. It dragged the mind through scenes of vice, and at the end, as a sop to decency, made the sinner suffer for his sins. "Wonderful!" said the woman. "How much

good that must be doing!" That is stark nonsense. Must we learn all over again in this realm what so laboriously we have had to learn in others? Our fathers used to witness the public execution of criminals. The theory was that the sight of violent death in punishment for crime would teach the people a lesson. But it did no such thing. The penologists learned that after public executions murders and crimes of violence increased. They discovered that "brutality begets brutality." In consequence, we keep our executions behind closed doors.

So, too, it is arrant imbecility for us to suppose that our unashamed and vociferous sex interest, our sex dramas, sex novels, sex films, sex lectures, and sex caricatures of psychoanalysis, with all their information, are helping to cleanse the life of our youth. Their effect is not cleansing but coarsening. They do not waken the aspiration for purity; they accustom the mind to impurity. We cannot wash our linen clean in dirty water.

The ultimate protection of youth against uncleanliness lies in an inbred respect for life's sanctities. A mother who has given to her son a deep reverence for womanhood has rendered to his purity the fundamental service. A church that has undergirdled a youth with the positive consciousness that his life is sacred has conferred the indis-

pensable gift. Often in matters of sex this respect for life's sanctities is associated with a sense of mystery, fortunately not yet dissipated by pestilential amateurs trying to save the world by telling all they know. Without that inward sense of honor, no information matters; with it, it is surprising what admirable results previous generations with all their reticence often obtained.

When we were children and had to cross a creek on a single log, we learned a trick which stood us in good stead. If we looked down at the swirling water underneath, the chances were more than even that we would fall in. But if we picked out a tree upon the other bank and held our heads up to look at it we could walk across. The trouble with our generation's present method of dealing with the sex problem lies in the endlessly repeated call to look down. "Look down," cry the books. "Consider how appalling impurity is!" "Look down," cry the plays. "Consider the terrible aftermath of impurity!" "Look down," cry the reformers. "See the horrible pit of impurity into which you are likely to fall!" Is it not about time that tune should be changed? How would it be if more voices were raised telling the young people to look up?

The positive ideal of a clean life that holds a high opinion of itself is youth's ultimate protection.

Phillips Brooks put it once in unforgetable words: "To keep clear of concealment, to keep clear of the need of concealment, to do nothing which he might not do out on the middle of Boston Common at noon-day,—I cannot say how more and more that seems to me to be the glory of a young man's life. It is an awful hour when the first necessity of hiding anything comes. . . . Put off that day as long as possible. Put it off forever if you can."

Self-respect like this establishes an instinctive quarantine in the mind. A self-respecting man, like a self-respecting country, will not allow plagues and pestilences to enter his ports. A ship may be very popular, with folk of prestige and wealth aboard to increase its credit, but if it carries pestilence it has to stop. Such a quarantine of the mind is inevitably set up in a man who holds a high opinion of himself, and nothing is more needed today among our youth.

IV

One reason why it is of vital concern to every citizen, whatever his special form of religious belief, that real religion should flourish in the commonwealth is that religion has always taught men thus to respect life's sanctities. Go into any land in any generation, and religion has always been saying

about something, "This must not be desecrated." To be sure, it may have been only a painted stick, a hideous idol, an altar red with sacrificial blood. Yet even in its crude and cruel forms religion has been doing humanity this service: it has kept alive the consciousness of something in human life which must not be violated. Imagine some scene where Roman armies fall upon a little country, sure in time to be crushed under the heel of the conqueror. See the feeble band of desperate men and women as they leave their city walls to the invader, give up their homes and hearths and draw in about their temple and their shrine. As they fall in defense of their holy place, for all the poor form of their devotion, there is this element of sublimity: they do believe that something in life is so sacred that a man would better die than have it violated.

No civilization will long survive the loss of that conviction. When that conviction appears in its finest form, it lifts life to its highest levels. One of the distinctive marks of Christianity at its best is that it teaches men to hold a very lofty opinion of themselves. They are children of God, made in his image, destined for his character. Not an outward temple, but the inward shrine of man's personality with all its possibilities and powers is seen to be infinitely sacred. Men say about themselves things the like of which they never had said before

—"now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." Men even dare to think that because their spiritual lives are the offspring of the Eternal Spirit, they are of essential importance in his eyes and have, therefore, illimitable possibilities and a glorious destiny. One central effect of religion at its best has been immeasurably to increase man's self-respect.

If one protests, upon the contrary, that Christianity has often depressed man's view of himself, insisting terribly on his sinfulness and depravity, the answer is plain. Only when you start by appreciating the high value of anything are you likely with any energy to deplore its prostitution. It is said that a servant once beat the household rugs with the master's flute. She doubtless was well content with the performance, but he was not. He knew what a flute was for. He raged at its misuse. So Christianity, loftily estimating what human personality was meant to be, has raged against sin, has said terrific things about man's wickedness, not because it held a low opinion of him, but because it held a high opinion.

One of the most important intellectual and practical problems of our time is the maintenance of this high estimate of the worth and greatness of human life against the devastating effects of a materialistic philosophy. The final result of mate-

rialism is to strip all sanctity from life, reduce everything to the activity of physical atoms, make human spirits helpless cogs in a gigantic mechanism, and in the end to present a picture of humanity born of the dust, doomed to the dust, without spiritual origin, spiritual meaning, or spiritual destiny. That undercuts everything that is excellent and august and beautiful in humanity. Many people treat religion as a negligible matter. The fact is that religion is fighting the battle for something indispensable to human welfare: the sense of something sacred here which must not be profaned.

V

Approaching religion from this angle, one sees that almost everybody has a religion of some sort. There are only a few lives without a spot of sacredness somewhere. A stranger may for hours wander about some old and poor quarter of London, peering into the show windows, casually interested in the traffic of the street, wondering at the hurly-burly of the city, and then, when least expecting it, may light upon some church so hidden that one easily could miss it. Slipping in, he will find an ancient shrine where kings have worshiped and martyrs lie buried, with glorious old windows where the light shines through the scenes of the

Savior's passion. So in the heart of many a man, overtopped and smothered by "business," unsuspected by his chance acquaintances, is to be found a hidden shrine. He is not so utterly irreligious as he sometimes seems. There is something in his life concerning which, at least at times, he feels a profound sense of sacredness.

Moreover, this hidden shrine, which often seems uninfluential, sometimes asserts itself with overwhelming power. Why is it so hard to sin? Why, when the lower passions gain control, can we not give them vent and be at peace as are the beasts? They are not ashamed. They do not do what we do—go around for years with dark memories in our hearts at the thought of which we cringe and yet to which with fascinated reminiscence our minds miserably return. Here is a man who has vilely wronged his family in such a way that he can never be found out; yet he brings the family to the minister's confessional and there pours out the story of his guilt. His hidden sanctities have risen in revolt. The temple of the living God in him has cried out against its desecration. For the sense of sin is the sense of sacrilege.

Indeed, anyone who starts by holding a high opinion of himself will certainly end by being ashamed of himself. Self-esteem and self-conceit are opposites. When a man thinks loftily of his

life's meaning he is hard to satisfy. The real reason why so many people think too much of themselves is that they do not think enough of themselves.

Few things are more important in our civilization than churches which worthily and intelligently will fulfill this inner function of religion, which will beget and develop in men a controlling sense of life's sanctities.

Indeed, this is indispensable not only to individual quality but to social reform. Every great moral campaign in history has been a protest against sacrilege. This is true of the crusades. When those knights headed for the Holy Land on a campaign that would cost the lives of so many of them, it was because they felt that something on earth, even though only an empty sepulcher in Palestine, was sacred and must not be desecrated. So, too, the driving power of all modern social movements is resentment against sacrilege. Child labor is sacrilege, for little children are holy and ought not to be ground up in our industrial order. War is sacrilege, for the personalities of men and women, boys and girls are sacred, and war debauches them. The liquor traffic is sacrilege, for it seeks profit from the damnation of human souls. Twelve-hour shifts in industry and inadequate compensation and indecent conditions of living are sacrilege, for they wrong human personality.

One often hears it said that religion has no business to try to decide economic and international questions. That statement can be so interpreted as to be true. But one thing is the business of religion; it always has been the business of religion —to lay its hands upon life's holy places and insist that they shall not be violated. The ministers of religion used to emphasize the sanctity of temples, shrines, the bones of saints, and holy relics. Now, however, religion will lay her hands on the real sanctity—human personality—and will fight with all the fierceness of the crusaders against its profanation.

This, then, is the conclusion of the matter: life can be either consecration or desecration, and no test of character goes much deeper than the decision as to which of these two it shall be.

Seeing the Invisible

I

ANYONE who is to live finely must have the ability to see in life something more than its prosaic elements. Riding on a New York bus recently I watched a girl with a brand-new diamond ring on the third finger of her left hand. Altogether unconscious of anybody or anything except her own happiness, she sat quietly looking at it. Now, I know what a diamond is in prosaic, scientific terms, because I went home and looked it up. A diamond is a form of crystallized carbon in which every carbon atom is "symmetrically surrounded by four other carbon atoms, arranged at the corners of a tetrahedron in such manner that the whole crystal is one continuous molecule." That is a diamond. But I should not consider it particularly worth while to disturb that young girl's thoughts by telling her that. She was seeing in that diamond something that all the scientists who ever drew diagrams of carbon atoms

well might envy. She was seeing the invisible. The diamond was to her a sacrament and symbol of unseen reality.

No man is the whole of himself until he has developed this capacity to see something in life besides its prose. We can, to be sure, put into prose our business letters, the daily news, the round of family gossip, the quotations of the stock exchange; the details of factual experience can be set in bare, plain prose. But no one should suppose that this represents the full truth about anything. If one would know the truth about an eagle, he may consult a scientific textbook and learn the ornithological details. They will be correct, but they will not be adequate to describe an eagle. Let Tennyson, for example, supply some of the lack:

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

That is an eagle!

Any man's life has been a failure when its whole story can be told in prosaic, indicative sentences. The deepest and finest experiences of humankind have always been expressed in poetry, bodied forth

in pictures, symbolized in imagination, set to music and sung. All of Christmas could not be expressed without evergreen trees, holly, mistletoe, angels, carols and Santa Claus. Most of us love great music because it says things which we feel but cannot tell. Gabrilowitch and Hofmann, Elman and Kreisler make articulate what we experience but cannot say. The florists' windows tell the truth: some things must be said with flowers.

People doubtless differ temperamentally in their sensitiveness to these nonprosaic elements in experience. But for all that, the degree to which a man is sensitive to them is one of the tests of his character. Indeed, in an age when strenuousness seems to many a sufficient solution of man's problems, few things need much more to be stressed. Even our modern Christianity, instead of being an endeavor after the pure heart that sees God, has become largely a gospel of "Wake up and go to work!"—which is doubtless a needed emphasis, but which alone is pitiably inadequate. There is such a thing as being overstrenuous, so restlessly wakeful that one loses vision.

If ever a man has had insomnia, has courted relaxation as a lover courts a maiden and has been unable to win it, has chased a quiet mind as boys chase thistledown upon the wind just beyond their straining reach, has sought for the grace of an hour's

sleep as men pray for victory when they fight, he knows that, while strenuousness may be the foreground of life, rest is the background, and that, lacking it, nothing else matters. As one watches the throngs of our never-quiet cities, one can see that the trouble with many of us is spiritual insomnia. Like the first dove from Noah's ark, we keep flying above the turbulent and swirling waters because there is no place to stop. We have overdeveloped our practical strenuousness; we have underdeveloped our responsiveness to life's healing, cleansing, redeeming spiritualities.

II

The gist of the matter lies in man's ability to turn his thoughts in three directions—down, out, and up. He can look down on things and animals beneath him in the scale of life; he can look out at comrades of his own humankind, upon a level with him; but he has also this other faculty from which the finest elements in human life have sprung—he can look up. Man's distinction is that he can admire, adore; that he is aware of something or Someone above him, possessing the right to his devout allegiance; that he can know reverence, which Shakspere rightly called "that Angell of the world."

As every minister knows, into whose confessional

come endless stories from real life, the trouble with multitudes of people is that they try to live upon the first two capacities without the third. They try to master the elements which lie below them; they try to live reasonably with the companions who are about them. They forget that the glory of life comes not from the things which we command, but from the things which we reverence; not from the lowest elements which serve us, but from the Highest whom we serve.

One reads the popular books about success and continually misses this primary matter, without the recognition of which all success is cheap and vulgar. We are told to grit our teeth and tackle the mastery of life's raw materials; we are told to learn coöperation with our fellows; but we are not told what many of us need most to learn, that responsiveness to what is above us is the soul of the whole business. You can always tell a man's quality by noting the things to which he is alive; people constantly reveal their spiritual rank by their responsiveness. Real music does not stir them; some cheap and tinsel tune does. The glories of God's out-of-doors awaken no response, but they are keen for the hectic excitement of a gambler's chances around tables undeserted all day long. The benedictions of a pure heart seem tame to them; they love the perversions of a vicious life. Speak to

them of great books, and they are dull; tell them the last unwholesome jest, and they are all animation. They are alive to the low; they are dead to the high.

Now, the capacity of response is not alone the test of our quality; it is the innermost secret of spiritual wealth. When a man responds to a great book he has not simply revealed himself; he has enriched himself. Only responsiveness can open the door of the heart to anything. This is the reason why an unresponsive child is the despair of a home. We can get along with almost anything except that. Passionate temper in a child is trying, but it is promising; what may not be done with a tempestuous boy when his energy has been harnessed and controlled? Lying in a child is dangerous; yet what may not be done with an imaginative lad who with difficulty distinguishes fact from fancy? Selfishness is a root of evil; but a child ambitious to possess and to surpass is raw material for strong living. All such faults are perversions of powers fundamentally good; but unresponsive sullenness—not a redeeming word can be said for that; it shuts the doors against everything. Dante, that most acute and penetrating analyzer of sin, did not put in the pit of his hell folk whose iniquity had sprung from passion. The pit of his hell was filled with sullen, ungrateful men, frozen in ice.

No one intelligently can evade this question of man's power responsively to look up to the Highest, by calling it an impractical matter. The most powerful living in history has been associated with it. It was a strange thing to hear the Americans in France during the war singing "Joan of Arc, they are calling you." Joan of Arc lived five hundred years ago. She was only sixteen years old when she began her great career; she knew nothing about our powerful engines of battle, but rode a horse and wielded a single sword. Yet, half a millennium afterward, our American men were singing "Joan of Arc, they are calling you." The reason is not far to seek: Joan of Arc lived with the invisible; she had angels so real that she gave names to them—St. Catherine and St. Margaret—angels that bodied forth for her the reality and nearness and guidance of the spiritual world; and they carried her a long, long way and made her name a flame of fire until this day.

Nobody has ever counted in this world without "angels." Responsiveness to the Unseen is the great driving power for strong living. The most matter-of-fact man among us may well recall that we number our years from the birth of One from the gravitation of whose life we no more can escape than the tides from the moon, because the Invisible was real to him and he knew God.

III

This hunger for assurance about the reality and friendliness of the Unseen is the explanation of the strange custom of going to church. The question why folk do not go to church has been often discussed. There is nothing modern in the query. In 1572, at the opening of Parliament, Sir Nicholas Bacon raised the inquiry "why the common people in this country universally come so seldom to Common Prayer and Divine Service." The real question, however, is the opposite of that: why does anybody ever go to church at all? Few customs are more widespread and more persistent than church-going, and it seldom has been more common than in the days since religion became voluntary. There must be something ingrained in human nature to which so strange a habit makes appeal. Oliver Wendell Holmes once said that there was in the corner of his heart a plant called reverence which needed watering about once a week.

Religious worship rests back upon this fact that man, just because he is man, cannot help looking up. "The soul can never rest in things beneath itself." It is not theology that folk come to seek; it is satisfaction for the upreach of their lives. Theology, with its endless subdivisions of fine

points, makes much less difference than some folk think.

Said the guide at the Sorbonne in Paris: "This is the hall where the doctors of divinity have disputed for four hundred years."

"Indeed!" said the visitor. "And pray, what have they settled?"

Theology, like a telescope, is made simply to help people see, and like a telescope it is meant to be looked through and not looked at. An old-fashioned preacher goes into the pulpit with an old-fashioned theology. Well, Copernicus and Galileo and Kepler had old-fashioned telescopes; this modern universe was first opened up by men with instruments now out of date. If that preacher, instead of talking about his theology, really uses it, if he says "Look with me for a few moments at the Eternal," the people will get what they came for, will thank God, take courage, and go out to live with a new sense of the reality of the Unseen. Moreover, the next Sunday a liberal preacher with a new theology can preach in the same pulpit with the same result.

Only, we liberal preachers are too often tempted to go into our pulpits with our new-fashioned instruments, saying: "See my telescope. It is the latest model. There is no new-fangled device that is not on it—or if you can suggest one I will get it."

One can almost hear the people in the pews re-

acting to that sort of preaching. "In heaven's name," they say, "why advertise so loudly the date of your telescope? We are plain people, very busy. We have little time to spend going to church. But if, through any telescope you chance to have, you could give us a reassuring glimpse of the Eternal before we go into another week, that would help. 'Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' "

This does not mean that theological clarity and reasonableness are not important—they are as important as good telescopes—but it does mean that the elemental hunger which keeps driving people to religion, no matter in what intellectual terms it is served, is not theological passion at all, but spiritual need to be reassured about the reality and good will of the Unseen.

For materialism is doing its best to convince mankind that the Unseen is not real. Yet one might as well take a fresco of Michelangelo and let the physical sciences explain it all, reducing every glorious effect to physical atoms. It seems a simple matter thus to reduce the qualitative to the quantitative, to analyze the quantitative into its constituent elements and to state their laws, until a fresco in the presence of which multitudes have prayed is presented in a chemical formula. It is simple—but it is too simple. One listens in the end to a man like Sir Edward Burne-Jones. "There's a

lump of greasy pigment," says he, "at the end of Michelangelo's hog-bristle brush, and by the time it has been laid on the stucco there is something there that all men with eyes recognize as divine." Greasy pigment, hog-bristle brush, and stucco—nobody doubts that they are involved in the picture, but they do not make the picture. Something else is there, even if it cannot be caught in test tubes or weighed in scales. Creative mind may be mysterious, but it is real.

According to a fable said to have come from Denmark, a spider once slid down a single filament of web from the lofty rafters of a barn and established himself upon a lower level. There he spread his web, caught flies, grew sleek and prospered. One day, wandering about his premises, he saw the thread that stretched up into the unseen above him. "What is that for?" he said, and snapped it—and all his web collapsed.

A good deal of man's spiritual history is condensed into that fable. Unless we can keep our modern materialists from breaking our connections with the Unseen above us, some more of man's spiritual history will prove the fable true.

IV

The only way in which many impatient minds among us can maintain respect for the Church and

willingness to support it is by constantly remembering that behind all her foibles and failures she does strive to meet this central need of human life. Say "church" to some people, and they think at once of Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopalian churches, with their competitions, inadequacies, and faults. "Church" has no other significance to some, and often to such the church is a butt of ridicule. But suppose that any other organized form of human activity were treated so. If every time a man thought of representative government he had nothing in his mind except the exhibitions of it which many of our cities, states and nations are presenting, would he not ridicule that too?

It is said that Thomas Carlyle once endeavored to persuade Ralph Waldo Emerson on a visit to England that there really is a personal devil and, as a last resort, having exhausted all the arguments that he could lay his mind to, he took Emerson to a session of the British House of Commons as proof positive that the devil does exist.

Most citizens have plenty of excuse for such Carlylean moods about democratic assemblies. Yet that attitude does not do justice to representative government. One of the great hours in history struck when mankind ran into the idea that all the people should unite in making laws, which

then all the people would obey. Behind our pitifully fallible experiments with representative government stands the Ideal, worth everything our fathers gave for it and all that we can give—the democratic state.

So, behind the churches stands the Church, and the Church is not Anglican nor Methodist nor Baptist nor Presbyterian. The Church is the fellowship of souls who in the spirit have found God. Sometimes one discovers its members inside the visible churches and sometimes out. The visible churches are the fallible endeavor to express in an institution, limited by human frailty, the need of man for God and the approach of God to man. One sometimes goes home from hearing a great symphony and with his fingers on the window pane drums a melody that he remembers, knowing that it is a poor imitation of orchestral richness and variety. So inadequate the visible churches often are when they try to reproduce the meaning of the Church Invisible. One may turn his back upon the churches, but the Church is another matter.

All who speak truth to me commissioned are;
All who love God are in my church embraced.
Not that I have no sense of preference,
None deeper, but I rather love to draw,
Even here on earth, on toward that perfect law,
And Heaven's fine etiquette, where Who and Whence

May not be asked, but at the Wedding Feast
North may sit down with South, and West with East.

If any man supposes that this exaltation of the Church Invisible dispenses him from thinking that the visible churches matter, he should see that what we have been saying is the one thing that most of all makes them matter. The institutions that matter most on earth, like law courts and parliaments and families and churches, are those which are endeavoring amid frailty and difficulty to express something spiritual and eternal—justice or democracy or love or faith—without which man cannot live. No one has any business to despise a sincere attempt to put into expression, however faulty, something indispensable to man—and saving relationship with the Divine is indispensable to man. Point out to some of us, therefore, the humblest, narrowest, most struggling church to be found, and, while we may deplore it, we shall not despise it. We shall keep thinking of what it is trying to say. Insist, if one will, that it stammers and stutters. Yet consider what it is trying to say. That the Unseen is real, that around our spiritual lives, like the physical universe about our bodies, is the Spiritual Life from whom we came, by whom we are sustained, to whom we go—the Church is trying to say that through the churches. The fatherhood of God, the nearness and availability of

the Spirit, the saviorhood of the Divine outpoured in Christ, the purposefulness of creation, the coming victory of righteousness, the fulfillment of life through love and service, the hope of life eternal—such things the Church struggles to say through the churches.

Indeed, most of us who gratefully count ourselves members of the Church have some visible and local church to thank. A little meeting house still is standing in a country town to which my memory makes frequent pilgrimage. It was a small, dilapidated structure when I was a boy; it never has been rich or prosperous; it preached a theology which I do not now believe, and insisted on denominational peculiarities in which I have not now the slightest interest. But one day in a pew of that church, I as a boy caught a glimpse of the vision glorious. Every man has shrines to which his thankful recollection turns, and that old brick meeting house is one of mine, for there I moved up through the church visible into the Church Invisible.

V

The perennial need of human life for fresh invasions of reverence and spiritual insight seems clear. No character ever comes to its fulfillment without that. "I was common clay," says a Persian proverb,

"until roses were planted in me." As for our social problem, a cynical materialism is our most deadly foe. During the war a European paper published a poem praising the four elements of the universe: earth, water, fire and air. It praised the earth because we can dig trenches in it, the water because we can use submarines in it, fire because it belches from the cannon's mouth, air because from it bombs can fall. Spirituality is a much maligned and caricatured word; it often is made to mean, even by those who claim it, a vapid and sentimental piety, but that war poem is a picture of what this world without real spirituality would be.

As for a man's total attitude toward life and its meaning, the Easter time is a reminder of the ultimate barrenness of existence if one cannot live with the Invisible, for everything that is visible is transient. Our individual lives in all their outward aspects pass away. The great groupings of individuals in nations rise and fall. America, France, Britain —how solid and secure they seem! But so seemed Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Rome, until, like sand houses built by children on the shore, rising tides erased them.

So, too, the successive generations of humanity come and go. They fall like gigantic snowstorms, multitudinous in flakes, only to melt and disappear. At least forty million people die on this earth every

year. Every three years more inhabitants of the planet pass away than would make up the population of the United States. If someone eighty years old is reading this article, over three billion people have died since he was born. In the light of such facts, the beginning of Martineau's great prayer becomes meaningful: "O God, . . . before whose face the generations rise and pass away."

Even the solar system and the stars are transient, and to talk of the eternal hills is folly. Some stars are in embryo, being born out of whirling nebulæ; some are in their fierce and fiery youth; some, like our own sun, are past middle age; some are old and soon will die. Everything visible is temporal—our bodies, our nations, the generations of mankind, the very stars blown like bubbles in the sky.

One need not be surprised then to find many people agreeing with the naturalist who said: "In the visible world the Milky Way is a tiny fragment. Within this fragment the solar system is an infinitesimal speck, and of this speck our planet is a microscopic dot. On this dot tiny lumps of impure carbon and water crawl about for a few years, until they dissolve into the elements of which they are compounded."

Is that really all?

No one believes any more that the physical world is chaos; for all its mysteries, we know that it is

an orderly system. But must we think that the moral universe is a chaos, arising without cause, continuing without purpose, making us without meaning to, lacking any use for us now that we are here, and snuffing us all out like guttering candles in the end? That is not simply undesirable; it is irrational. There is no sense in it. One does not get sense into his life until he gets spiritual insight.

Some kinds of religion do not matter much. But to be sure that something more is here than accidental collocations of atoms, that mind is the maker of the universe, purpose at the heart of it, love underneath it, Providence in control of it, victory ahead of it—to be sure that

What is excellent,
As God lives, is permanent—

that does matter. To say with Robert Louis Stevenson, "I believe in an ultimate decency of things; ay, and if I woke in hell, should still believe it"—that matters very much!

The Privilege of Living

I

IT was said of Sir Walter Scott that he enjoyed more in twenty-four hours than most men do in a week. Such happiness may not be the only recommendation necessary to establish a man's character, but, other things being equal, it should count heavily in his favor. Goodness which is not radiant has something the matter with it. Goodness which, however impeccable, makes life seem cramped, pinched, restrained and unhappy, is not real goodness. Such good people are often exasperating nuisances. One who has to deal with them understands the little girl's prayer: "O God, make all the bad people good —and make all the good people nice!"

That happiness is a test of character can be seen from the fact that no relationship in human life ever comes to its best until it flowers out into the sense of privilege. Even the relationship of teacher

and pupils in a school is not fulfilled so long as the instructor by duress and discipline is forcing stolid children to their work. Only where intellectual curiosity is set on fire, where boys and girls with awakened minds are eager for their tasks, has the relationship come to its own.

In home life also happiness clearly is a test. Often marriage sinks to burdensome obligation—no more. Two people, true to a legal arrangement, but not delighting in a joyous fellowship, laboriously keep vows which once they swore to. There are other homes, however, where folk live together who would not be married to anybody else for all the world. If the government should annul all marriage vows, it would make no difference to them. They are a family because they love to be.

As for friendship, it is not enough to speak of that in terms of duty, obligation, responsibility. One must speak of that in terms of privilege. If friendship meant to anyone no more than duty to which he dragged himself with reluctant steps, we would pray to have him leave our circle. We wish none there save those in whom all sense of obligation is underlain and lifted as by a rising tide with the sense of privilege in being friends.

Happiness, therefore, is a real test of the fineness and success of our relationships. A man who has carried that inward victory so far that he is happy

about life as a whole and has become what Browning called

> *A happy-tempered bringer of the best*
> *Out of the worst,*

is rendering the world one of the greatest services possible to man. "We need not care," said Stevenson about happy people, "whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition; they do a better thing than that, they practically demonstrate the great theorem of the Liveableness of Life."

II

This test of happiness is plainly applicable to duty. Men can be roughly divided into three classes: those who dislike duty and refuse to do it; those who dislike it and drag themselves to it with reluctant consent; those who do their duty and thoroughly enjoy it. Representatives of the last class are far too scarce. One of the saddest facts in human life is the general impression which has everywhere obtained that duty is grim, hard, forbidding, and that if one wishes to be happy he would better break away from it. "I know that this must be bad for me," said a young boy with a favorite dessert, "because it tastes so good."

Undoubtedly a large factor in making right living

seem thus a dour affair has been our treatment of children in the home. The first impressions of childhood are almost ineradicable, and the first impression which many a home makes upon a child is that duty is an unpleasant necessity. He feels driven to it by fear of ill consequence if he disobey. Desirable results in quiet and good order can be at once obtained by a swift and vehement appeal to such fear. "If you do not stop that," we burst out to a little child, "I will——." And then follows the first threat that leaps into the irate parent's mind. The consequence is immediate: A shivering life draws in upon itself, constrained, repressed. No wonder that duty has uncomfortable associations in multitudes of minds! It is a commentary on parents everywhere that, over two thousand years after Alexander the Great conquered India, Indian mothers are still telling their children that Iskander will get them if they do not obey.

Upon the other hand, to discover the petulant child's real need and to give a true satisfaction where a false one was being sought, to unfold the disobedient child into positive goodwill that drives ill-will out; to get joyful expression instead of sullen repression—anyone can tell that this is the superior method by noting the faculties in himself which this requires. All that it takes to appeal to fear is indignation and vehemence, and they are cheap. But

so to understand the child as to unfold his life into positive and radiant character takes the finest qualities that we possess—insight, sympathy, intelligence, tact and patience. Some parents bring up their children on thunder and lightning, but thunder and lightning never yet made anything grow. Rain and dew and sunshine cause growth—quiet, penetrating forces that develop life. And while thunder and lightning are occasionally useful to clear the air, it is amazing with how little of them a family can get along if only there is enough of the vitality that causes growth.

This does not mean that duty always is easy; it does not deny the self-sacrifice which right living involves. Everything worth while in the intellectual or moral life must be bought and paid for by giving up irreconcilable habits and indulgences. To be a good physician, a good lawyer, a good musician, or a good Christian means self-denial. But there are too many folk who never get beyond that emphasis. Their goodness is always a burden to them. They are halfway good, wishing to indulge in evil, but not daring to, clinging to right living with reluctant resolution, looking upon duty as an elephant might on his rider, sitting on his neck and pulling at his ears with an iron prong to make him go whither he would not.

If a man in any realm is to achieve distinction he

must outgrow that halfway stage. On warm spring days a schoolboy may miserably endeavor to break in his mind to the study of history. "The battle of Marathon," he reads, "was fought in 490 B.C."—and then across his imagination floats the vision of the brook where trout begin to rise. Alas, the burden of learning history! "The battle of Platæa," he continues, "settled the question whether Greek influence or Persian should be supreme in Europe" —and then a robin sings through the open window and issues invitations in the name of springtime that drive him almost to despair. Alas, the burden of studying history! Such a beginning for a student of history is not unnatural, but if ever that boy is to become a real historian—as well may be the case —little by little the consciousness of what is excluded by his study will grow dim. More and more the sense of privilege in knowing history will become warm. He will enter with delight into the thoughts and ambitions of generations gone and will rejoice to find in deeds long passed the spring of all that happens among us. If ever he is to be a real historian, the sense of privilege will be the sign of it.

If ever a man is to be a real anything, the sense of privilege will be the sign. A physician to whom doctoring is not a privilege is no real physician. A teacher to whom teaching is not a privilege is no real teacher. A friend to whom friendship is not

a privilege is no real friend. When we think of real patriots we think of Nathan Hale, who wished that he had more lives to lose for his country. When we think of real heroes we think of David Livingstone, who so loved his hazardous explorations that he thought he had never made a sacrifice in his life. When we think of a real Christian we think of a man like Paul, who even in a prison could thank God for counting him worthy to be in the ministry.

This conquest of duty, by which we not only do it, but enjoy doing it, counting the gains far greater than the losses, is an illustration of what the psychologists call selective attention. Some folk dwell upon the positive gains in right living; others dwell upon the negative self-denials. What different pictures of a home exist in different people's minds! One person would say: A home is God's best gift, the place where love is purest and dearest and deepest, where life's shocks are cushioned by unfailing friendliness, where we are best known and yet best loved and trusted, where we can be ourselves without fearing to be misunderstood, and where the years deepen the tested loyalty of those whom we love better than ourselves. Ask another what a home is, and a very different answer would be given: A home is a place where we have to consider the wishes of others, where we cannot always have

our own way, where children fall sick and require sacrificial care, where puzzling problems rise which it is hard to settle, where we must be true to love to keep it, where every day brings some small self-denial and every year some great one. The fact is that both these pictures are true, but anyone who appreciates a real home would be utterly impatient with the second. To be sure, a good home means self-denial, but, then, it is worth it. The gains immeasurably outweigh the sacrifices. It is not a burden to have a good home. No matter what it costs, it is one of life's highest privileges.

The only kind of goodness that does much good in the world is of this joyful sort. Many people have a depressing way of approaching duty. "Ought I?" they say. They drag themselves to it like Shakspere's

> *. . . whining school-boy, with his satchel*
> *And shining morning face, creeping like snail*
> *Unwillingly to school.*

But there are others who come with another question, "May I?" They clear the air like a northwest wind, making it bracing and buoyant. Right living, as they see it, is an invitation extended, a privilege offered, a boon conferred. They are like Doctor Bushnell, concerning whom it was said that "even his dying was play to him." They alone

commend goodness to the world, for most people choose goodness, if they choose it at all, for the same reason that Tolstoy became a Christian: "I saw around me people who, having this faith, derived from it an idea of life that gave them strength to live and strength to die in peace and in joy."

III

To be sure, this world is often a desperately difficult place to be happy in. During the Great War a group of American naval aviators were stationed on a barren island off the northwest coast of France where, amid lonely and desolate conditions, they carried on their hazardous scouting in the air. One day an officer, censoring the men's letters, ran upon this message from one man to his wife: "Please don't send me any more nagging letters. I can't stand it. You are three thousand miles away and it don't do no good. Do let me enjoy this war in peace." Life frequently presents grim situations where to enjoy war in peace is the only kind of happiness that we can expect.

For life is a queer mixture. Good fortune and ill befall us with bewildering variety. Most folk in the long run get their share of both. Happiness, therefore, does not depend primarily on the preponderance of fortunate over unfortunate circum-

stance, although no one would belittle that. Primarily happiness depends on a man's insight, on his capacity to find in any situation elements that make it worth while. It is fascinating to watch the inevitableness with which what a man is inside determines what he will find outside. The Bible, for example, has meant peace, comfort, illumination, moral power to multitudes, but because Whistler, the artist, was a bitter controversialist, writing and publishing scathing attacks on enemies and former friends, he came to the Bible with a jaundiced eye and found in it what he brought. "That splendid mine of invective"—such was his description of the Book! It is this capacity to find in life what you bring to it that causes a great deal of the world's unhappiness.

If any one insists on discovering something to be unhappy over, there is nothing to prevent his finding it. Unfortunate elements exist in any man's life. The race's literature has loved to dwell upon these vulnerable spots which are to be found in the most highly gifted and fortunate of men. Achilles is dipped in the River Styx by his mother Thetis to make him invulnerable, but the heel by which she holds him is not wet. Siegfried bathes in the dragon's blood, but a lime leaf falls upon his back and leaves one unprotected spot. Balder's mother, in the Icelandic sagas, makes all Nature except the

mistletoe swear not to harm her son, and by the mistletoe he falls. Every life has its weak spots, its lamentable elements, and if we insist on emphasizing them we can make miserable business out of living. Tyndall said that a bucket or two of water, whipped into a cloud, can obscure an Alpine peak. In practical experience, the heights of life are often hidden by just such a process.

Upon the other hand, there are few lives where a positive and appreciative attitude will not discover plenty of things to be happy over. A young British soldier during the war landed at Southampton with both his legs cut off close to the hips. Even the surgeon who greeted him winced. "That is hard luck," he said. "Oh, I don't know," said the soldier, "I thank my God that I have my health and strength yet!" The plain fact is that some of the happiest people we have ever known have been in difficult circumstances, handicapped within and hard bestead without; but for all that, by the magic of selective attention, they lived radiant and victorious lives.

The kind of insight which discovers happiness in difficult situations, commonplace people, and customary tasks is one of the surest tests of character, for it always involves generosity, appreciativeness, love. The one man who cannot know abiding happiness is the self-absorbed man. Dr. Charles R.

Brown tells us of a trip up the Rhine from Cologne to Mainz. An American family boarded the boat and asked for some ice cream. Informed that there was none, they became very unhappy. They had been used to ice cream on the Hudson day boats, and they saw no reason why they should not have it on the Rhine day boats. All day they grumbled. The trip took them past Lorelei, and Drachenfels, Ehrenbreitstein, and the mouth of the Moselle, but they missed most of the beauty—they wanted some ice cream. They were like Pompilia's father in Browning's poem, who

> *Shut his fool's eyes fast on the visible good*
> *And wealth for certain; opened them owl-wide*
> *On fortune's sole piece of forgetfulness.*

For them it was not a happy day, for only the appreciative are happy and only the unselfish can be appreciative. Many people, at the end of a longer journey than the Rhine trip, have missed the joy of it because they were obsessed with something which they wanted for themselves.

It is a great day in any man's life when he discerns that no situation is without its redeeming elements, no task without its interesting opportunities, no people without their picturesque aspects; that nothing in life is really commonplace; that commonplaceness in others is only lack of insight in ourselves. In William C. Gannett's words:

The poem hangs on the berry-bush,
When comes the poet's eye;
The street begins to masquerade,
When Shakspere passes by.

IV

The Declaration of Independence joins in a single phrase "liberty" and "the pursuit of happiness," and, so doing, marries two ideas which belong together. Real happiness is indissolubly associated with freedom. Angelo Patri tells us that a little Sicilian lad landed a few years ago at the port of New York when the city was aflame with flags. It was the proudest day of that boy's life, because he thought the flags were flying to welcome him, who from far Sicily was coming to the land of promised freedom. Later he found himself in a public school in the Italian quarter of the city, having difficulty with the English tongue. But one day he brought to his teacher a piece of pottery which he had made, with a scene from his homeland molded on it. The teacher was a real educator. She wanted to bring out to free expression what was in her pupils. She rose like the sun in encouragement upon that boy's work. The boy began with a pottery class in the school; now, a young man of large promise studying the Beaux Arts, he is looking forward to a promised period of residence in Rome.

He says now that he knows the flags were not flying for him the day he came; he knows now that it was Lincoln's Birthday. But he thinks that in a sense they were flying for him, because America was giving to him the kind of welcome that Lincoln would have liked to have him get.

That boy is happy because he is being set free, is having liberated within him his latent possibilities and powers. Happiness is a test, not only of one's power to find in duty a privilege and not a burden, to discern redeeming elements in untoward situations; it is a test also of the degree to which we are achieving an inward release of our own personalities. No cramped and smothered life is happy. People are happy as they become inwardly free.

All movements for human welfare can be interpreted in terms of this desired release of life from pinching handicaps into fulfillment and abundance. To lift the economic burdens which depress life and spoil opportunity, to liberate folk from the slavery of their diseases, to set men free by education from the Town of Stupidity, which, as Bunyan rightly says, is only four degrees north of the City of Destruction itself—all these endeavors to give persons a chance to be their best selves are crusades for human emancipation and happiness. Nobody doubts the place of education or of economic betterment in this list of life's liberators, but there is one force

which ought to be in this list which many people do not think of putting there—religion.

It never will be altogether well with us until we see that religion at its best is a great emancipator of personality, and until we get more religion at its best to function toward that end.

Strangely enough, many folk, so far from thinking of religion as a radiant, joyful, liberating force, class it in an opposite category. A typical conversation over a dinner table reached the conclusion that churches and ministers are necessary and should be supported for the common good, because so many people need restraints put upon their exuberant wickedness, and churches and ministers furnish these restraints. These convivial analysts of the religious life interpreted it, not in terms of liberation, but in terms of suppression. Our schools and shops and factories are filled with youth who, if the suggestion came that they should be Christians, would never think of it as promising the unfolding of life into a new liberty, the expansion of life into its true fulfillment; it would mean to them a call to delimit and suppress themselves, to restrain and cramp life. They would feel as some of us used to feel when, gladly playing out-of-doors, we were summoned in to prayers because the minister had come to call. How we dragged ourselves with unwilling feet into the old-fashioned parlor where we had to be careful

not to knock the knickknacks from the whatnot or brush the tidies from the upholstered furniture!

Nevertheless, the men who best have known what Christian living is have always talked of it in terms of liberty. In view of this conflict between the misunderstanding of the mob and the testimony of the experts, we may justly make one claim: Christianity has a right to be judged in terms of its own noblest exhibitions and not in terms of its perversions and caricatures. It has here the same right which any essential aspect of man's life, like music, has.

Music to some people is one of the noblest and most liberating gifts of God to men; it takes spirits grown heavy amid things material and gives them wings to fly; it is Händel and Wagner and Chopin and Mozart and Grieg.

But to others music is ragtime ground from hand organs, and music-hall ballads, and the ribald songs of vaudeville; it is the catch-penny tunes of tired mechanical pianos, the calliope at the circus and the mouth organ of the newsboy at his stand. No intelligent man, however, accepts the latter description as adequate, for music has a right to be understood in terms of its noblest utterance. So, too, has religion. Much popular Christianity is not liberating and joyful; it is repressive, constraining, imprisoning to mind and spirit. But it is that because it is not really Christian.

One suspects that Jesus would understand better than we do some of our young people who run wild and fall on ruin like the prodigal.

Many of them are brought up to think that goodness means repression. All through their maturing youth they keep coming upon new powers, new passions, new ambitions, and they are told that these must be repressed. At first they docilely accept that negative idea. They try to be good by saying "no" to their surging life.

Then, some day, they grow so utterly weary of this tame, negative, repressive goodness that they can tolerate it no longer, and they start out to be free in wild self-indulgence, only to find it the road, not to freedom, but to slavery, with habits that bind them and diseases that curse them and blasted reputations that ruin them. Would not Jesus say to them some such thing as this: "You have made a bad mistake. Goodness is not mainly repression. It is finding your real self and then having it set free. It is positively living for those things which alone are worth living for. It is expression, the effulgence of life into its full power and its abundant fruitage. I came that ye might have life, and that ye might have it abundantly."

That is real Christianity, as it is the spirit of Jesus.

Some Christians carry their religion on their backs.

It is a packet of beliefs and practices which they must bear. At times it grows heavy and they would willingly lay it down, but that would mean a break with old traditions, so they shoulder it again. But real Christians do not carry their religion, their religion carries them. It is not weight; it is wings. It lifts them up, it sees them over hard places, it makes the universe seem friendly, life purposeful, hope real, sacrifice worth while. It sets them free from fear, futility, discouragement, and sin—the great enslavers of men's souls. You can know a real Christian, when you see him, by his buoyancy.

Minding One's Own Business

I

SAID Dwight L. Moody, "I have had more trouble with myself than with any other man I have ever met." Most people could say the same thing. In the old "Wonderland" which used to charm the children, many of us recall walking down a corridor through the farther end of which we saw people approaching us as we approached them, until suddenly we bumped into ourselves in a mirror.

And in the larger wonderland of mature experience, we have discovered that no man travels far without encountering himself. He may go into business with alluring prospects, but he soon discovers that his major problem is himself. He may inherit or achieve ample professional opportunity, but he soon discovers that his major problem is himself. He may marry amid the congratulations of his friends, but he soon sees that the maintenance of a fine home is primarily a problem with himself.

When the Prodigal Son sat among the swine in the far country, the parable tells us that he "came to himself." That was not a single experience—he kept coming to himself. He could find no road anywhere that did not lead back to himself. Whichever way he turned he ran into himself.

The resolute grappling of a man with his own life is one of the most searching tests of character, for most people are willing to grapple with anything else under heaven, from international problems to spiritualism, rather than to face squarely their individual responsibility for their own lives. A poet once had a dream, so runs the tale, in which he was ruined by a veiled figure. He dreamed that he made a fortune and the veiled figure snatched it from him, that he achieved fame and the veiled figure turned it to disgrace. He dreamed that the veiled figure frightened him in bed, spoiled the taste of his food at table, abashed him in company, and on the poet's wedding day stopped the mouth of the priest, crying "I forbid the banns!" "Who are you?" cried the wretched poet, tearing away the veil —and lo, the face of the stranger was his own!

The ruination of most people is themselves.

The clear recognition of this fact is one of the elements in Shakspere's greatness as a dramatist. No tragedies compare with his, and for this reason among others: he saw that life's real tragedy lies

within ourselves. Even the old Greek dramatists, with all their insight, caused their victims to fall on ruin because of a mysterious cosmic fate which ruled the destinies of gods and men. Shakspere, however, shifts the battlefield to the souls of men:

> *The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,*
> *But in ourselves, that we are underlings.*

Hamlet wrestles with his own hesitant, shocked and indecisive soul, Macbeth with his own ambition and remorse, Othello with his own insatiable jealousy. The greatest characters in Shakspere's tragedies are all having it out with their own souls.

The insight of the dramatist lighted here on a fundamental law of life. All that a lion eats becomes lion. All that a serpent eats becomes serpent. Through the whole of life runs the mysterious law of assimilation, by which not so much the outward nature of the thing devoured, but the inward nature of the one who eats it determines the consequence. Every man's fate is himself.

II

So elemental is this fact that one might expect men, as the initial business of living, resolutely to take charge of their own lives, to deal decisively with

the problem of their own character and careers, to make themselves responsible for themselves. Upon the contrary, one of the commonest sights is folk who make themselves responsible for everybody else except themselves. With the middle of the eighteenth century humanitarianism and philanthropy began to flourish as never before. In spite of war and its bitter fruits, there has been since then an immense expansion of the social conscience. "Am I my brother's keeper?" is a question to which all right-minded folk feel under obligation to say "Yes." It is, however, a dangerous question to answer glibly in the affirmative. A vague, sentimental interest in everybody else is much easier to achieve than that elemental act of will by which a man decisively takes charge of his own life and makes something worth while out of it.

There are some possessions with which we are not likely to be too generous. With genuine sympathy, with real friendship, with wisely distributed money, we may be as generous as we please. But we can easily be too generous with our sense of responsibility. If anybody has a large amount of that valuable article, it is always safe advice that he should use by all odds the major portion of it on himself.

Some of the most unamiable people with whom we deal make their failure here. Henry Ward Beecher once said: "The reforms are well enough;

but I can not swallow the reformers." Beecher would have many sympathizers today. A real reformer is a public blessing, but his counterfeit is a hectic uplifter so zealous about saving the world at large that he himself, acrimonious, dogmatic, censorious, and altogether unlovable, has lost whatever persuasive beauty he might have had. The tempter is extraordinarily ingenious and resourceful. When he cannot spoil a life one way, he manages to do it another. Some he ruins by their selfishness; they will think of no one save themselves. When, however, he finds folk who insist on thinking of other people, he changes his tactics. He makes them think about other people all the time, worry about other people, assume responsibility for other people, meddle with other people, until at last these victims of his wiles reach the estate which Jesus pictured—a man with a beam in his own eye, trying with laborious unselfishness to get a mote out of his brother's eye.

Sir George Mellish was one of the great jurists of England. As a member of a committee appointed to draw up resolutions of congratulation to the Queen, he discovered that his colleagues had begun one resolution with the words "Being conscious as we are of our own defects."

"No, no," said Judge Mellish, "that will never do. We must not lie to Her Majesty. Change it to

'Being conscious as we are of one another's defects!' "

Indeed, so difficult is it to learn this lesson of using our sense of responsibility upon ourselves, that one would like to know whether the readers of this article have not been saying "This hits off So-and-So exactly. He needs this. He always is meddling in other people's business." So we shy the truth at somebody else. We feel very responsible about other people. One of the rarest of virtues in this world is the resolute grappling of a man with his own life.

On Sunday, August 5, 1860, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote in his diary, "John Ware, of Cambridge, preached a good sermon." And then Longfellow added what many people cannot honestly say after a sermon: "I applied it to myself."

III

Decisive dealing with one's own life is always a major problem in youth. Over twenty years ago a Hungarian boy, whose ancestors had toiled in poverty for centuries on a farm in the Carpathian Mountains, landed at the port of New York. He arrived poor in money, family, and friends, and, having heard that all wealth came from Pittsburgh, he went there. Too young to work in the mines, he went into

a hotel kitchen and washed dishes. Trying to size up the reasons for America's superior opportunities, he put his finger on education. Then he worked by day and studied by night. When he graduated from high school, appointed orator, he took as his subject, "The Great Opportunities Which America Gives to the Boys Who Come Here." He worked his way through one of our first-rate universities and graduated with honor; he worked his way through the Harvard Law School. Now he is associated with a leading law firm in New York City, and a year ago he was admitted to the bar. Many first-rate qualities of character helped to make possible such an achievement, but at the heart of all of them was this primary virtue: that young man decisively and efficiently took charge of himself.

How different is the life of many of our youth! Instead of putting responsibility on them, we surround them from the time they are born with every comfort that money can buy. To a mature mind, knowing the humble breeding places of great ability, such well-to-do homes run by indulgent parents prophesy no superiority in the children who are reared there. But how shall the children know that? To live in a fine house, surrounded by a commodious environment, to be pampered and protected, to have money to spend, leisure to enjoy, to move in the best circles—how subtly these so-

called advantages weave their spell around growing children. Life looks easy. They learn to trust their fortunate circumstances, not themselves. In Scott's phrase, they count on a fine set of china to heighten the flavor of indifferent tea. The result is often worse than wildness; the result is indecisiveness, irresponsibility, a meandering, irresolute, procrastinating life that never arrives. And in youth indecisive procrastination is fatal. The marvel of living when we are young is that life is a fairy land of possibilities. When a youth says that he has not yet decided whether he will be a civil engineer, or a landscape artist, or a lawyer, or a professional aviator, or a clergyman, we have to take him seriously. He may be any one of these. The doors are all open. He is young. But we who have reached maturity have all these years been growing familiar with the sound of closing doors. The range of our possible choices has been narrowing down. There are some things on earth we never can do now. It is too late. Happy the youth who takes charge of his life in time, makes worthwhile decisions about the loyalties, purposes and ambitions that shall control him, finds his work in the world and masters it!

Behind most of the shilly-shallying of young people is the idea that they can bluff life through without tackling the problem of themselves. It is a vain hope; life has been at the game for a long

time and knows all the moves. To many a youth wealth appears omnipotent, so that to possess it seems a sufficient substitute for serious wrestling with oneself. The fact is, however, that great possessions only throw a man back upon himself. For there is an important difference between possession and ownership: possession is having things; ownership is the enjoyment and appreciative use of things. Said the poet to Dives, "The land is yours, but the landscape is mine." Possession concerns what a man has in his hands; ownership concerns what a man is in himself.

Possession is sending downtown, as one woman is said to have done, for three yards of good books in brown bindings to match the furniture; ownership is saying with Fénélon, "If the crowns of all the kingdoms in Europe were laid down at my feet in exchange for my love of reading, I would spurn them all." Possession is having a morocco-bound copy of Wordsworth that you never look at; ownership is having Wordsworth, it may be in paper covers, a source of inextinguishable delight. Possession is having a house; ownership is having a home. Possession is material; ownership is spiritual. A man may possess millions and own nothing. How much a man owns depends on the height and breadth and depth of his mind and soul.

Nor does a youth evade the necessity of tackling

himself when he tries to achieve an education. No amount of acquired information will in the end make much of a man out of him unless he resolutely wrestles with his own thinking. It is easy to be, as Pope put it, a

bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head.

But to be a straight-thinking, reliable, intelligent man is difficult.

A young Polish girl in a New York school, asked in common with her class to write an essay on the difference between an educated and an intelligent man, summed up the matter: "An educated man gets his thinks from someone else, but an intelligent man works his own thinks."

Nor does the youth evade the tackling of himself when, under the impulse of friendliness, he tries to be useful. The choicest gift that any man can give his friends is himself at his best. Most people are willing to give almost anything rather than that. Even fathers and mothers will give their children *things* in lavish and sometimes smothering abundance, but *themselves* at their best in intimate companionship—for the lack of that bestowal homes go to ruin. Every real endeavor after friendly usefulness throws a man back on himself, and more than once, with most of us, out of the

charcoal pit of what we are the fumes have risen to spoil the grace and beauty of the thing that we have done.

Even if a youth in all these realms succeeded in evading the necessity of tackling himself, trouble would still be left, and trouble is an adept at forcing a man to grapple with himself. Samuel Pepys, for example, has left in his diary the most intimate record that any man ever put on paper about his own life. As we read it we watch with interest, amusement, sometimes pity, his vanities, ambitions, quarrels, conceits, and prejudices, his ingenious schemes for self-advancement, his toadying, and his pride. If ever a man might have bluffed life through with little serious tackling of himself, he was endowed for the purpose. But when he was thirty-seven years old life brought him up with a round turn. Blindness came upon him. "And so," he wrote as he closed his diary, "I betake myself to that course, which is almost as much as to see myself go into my grave: for which, and all the discomforts that will accompany my being blind, the good God prepare me!" At last even Pepys had to wrestle with himself.

One way or another life forces us to this primary test of character. No good life ever yet was lived which did not face it and win through. The decisive issue may come as a struggle with temper or

habit, as a battle with oneself over the vocation to which life shall be given, as a definite call to self-sacrifice, as a collision with disappointment and misery, as a conflict between religious faith and doubt—in whatever way it rises, it divides men like Judgment Day. The man who has not successfully grappled with himself will never grapple successfully with anybody else.

IV

At its deepest this inner problem of human life is simply the age-long religious problem in its intensest form—the relationship of a man with his own soul. One does not mean by "soul" what a young woman recently defined it to be: "a sort of round haze a little larger than a baseball, somewhere in the body near the heart." A man's soul is his whole invisible personality—self-conscious being that thinks, purposes, and loves—a man's spiritual life in its heights and depths. Happy the youth who before it is too late discovers that no success elsewhere matters without success here! For youth *is* the time in which to face this inner problem of the spiritual life. In infancy our bodies first awake to enjoy the world into which we have been born; then our minds awake to curious questioning and restless desire for knowledge; then our souls awake

to a conscious search for life's spiritual meaning and purpose. Unless a youth has been too early perverted and wronged, he will not easily escape this third experience. A certain flare and flame of spiritual chivalry is one of the noblest birthrights of a normal youth.

Some of us can read with dry eyes now Emerson's essay on "The Over-Soul," but when first in youth we read it we wept for very joy of having been born into a world where such high thoughts dwelt. Some of us calmly can observe a great cathedral now, but when in youth we first saw one we walked about in it for hours, in worlds unrealized, and thought that we heard the souls of all the dead who ever had worshiped there singing "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!" Some of us can listen calmly now to the call of duty, but looking back to youth we know what the poet meant:

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, Thou must,
The youth replies, I can!

There is glory about youth, when the soul, which has waited like an enchanted princess for some prince to rouse her, awakes and looks with fresh and unspoiled eyes on life.

See, then, what we do with this priceless experi-

ence, this unutterable opportunity from the beginning to possess a rich and resourceful spiritual life! Some of us do cherish it. Although life is always hard upon it, and although it is impossible to keep it with its first naïve and childlike freshness, we do cherish it. In some of us it even grows deeper with the years, like Beethoven's music. At eight Beethoven played in a concert; at eleven he was made deputy court organist. There must have been a flame about the youthful playing of that ardent soul. But not until he was thirty-eight did he write the fifth and sixth symphonies; not until he was forty-five did he write the seventh and eighth; and he wrote the ninth at fifty-two. He is a parable of a spiritual experience which bubbles up in youth like a sparkling fountain and then flows out, a broadening, deepening river, toward the sea.

Some of us so deal with our souls, but some of us do the very opposite. Busy, ambitious, over-engaged, amid the pressure of our preoccupation we lose our souls. That phrase used to be applied chiefly to the next world. However that may be, it certainly applies to this one. Men lose their souls —smother them, neglect them, maltreat them, crowd them out. As Richard Burton sings,

If I had the time to find a place
And sit me down full face to face

With my better self, that cannot show
In my daily life that rushes so:
It might be then I would see my soul
Was stumbling still toward the shining goal;
I might be nerved by the thought sublime—
If I had the time!

Multitudes of people so lose their souls.

Such folk are headed in toward inevitable self-reproach. For the soul is like a lighthouse. There are times when to some people it does not seem indispensable. The coastline is familiar, the skies are fair, the breeze is light and the waters calm. But times do come even to such folk when the gales rise, the night closes in, the waters are riotous, and the lighthouse, which but a few hours before seemed to be negligible, becomes their only hope.

So, too, no man will altogether escape the more serious aspects of life. Troubles come, when we need our souls. Temptations like bandits out of ambush leap on us to steal our honor from us, or work grows monotonous and wearisome and a secret loathing and distaste for life haunt us, and we need our souls. And death comes at last—that "dark mother always gliding near with soft feet"—and when she touches us we want our souls.

V

Indeed, even in the most ordinary days there is for men of insight no escaping this innermost prob-

lem of life. Each of us is continually building from within out, constructing from the materials which the soul gathers out of the world the real world in which each lives. There are over five million people in the City of New York—but in which City of New York? There are almost as many New Yorks as there are people there. There is a New York of business, bounded on the north by stocks and on the south by bonds. There is a New York of music, where are some people who know that man cannot live by bread alone. There is a New York of fashion that goes back and forth like a shuttle between the milliner on the one side and the caterer on the other. There is a New York of education, where the spirit is not altogether dead that made Pestalozzi live "as a beggar among beggars—that beggars might live like men." There is a New York of sport that looks upon the Polo Grounds as the very hub of the universe. And there is the New York of religion, where are some people who are sure that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Even such a rough division of New York is superficial in comparison with the facts of our individual lives. Each lives in his own New York. He made it. His soul gathered out the materials of which it is built, and there he lives. Alike the glory and tragedy of life are to be found here: each of us

lives in the world of his own soul. When Oliver Goldsmith was so poor that he could not make both ends meet, he had to live in a room below the level of the street. One day a contemptible boor laughed at him for it. "You lodge in a basement," said the boor. And Goldsmith came back like lightning: "Your soul must lodge in a basement."

That is certainly the correct address of a good many souls, and all true seers have, like Whittier, found in that fact the central tragedy of life:

Oh, doom beyond the saddest guess,
As the long years of God unroll
To make thy dreary selfishness
The prison of a soul!

One suspects, therefore, that religion has a long while yet to run before its work is over. For in its innermost and intensest meaning religion has concerned itself with the release, emancipation, salvation, growth of the soul. Behind its disguises of theory and ritual, all great religion has one common center: it sees human life as the adventure of the soul. Its insistent question always is: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" To religious insight the most important truth about man is that he has been entrusted with himself, capable on the one hand of dismal failure, or on the other of high adventure

into the life that is life indeed. A dog can make a failure of himself, but not much of a failure. A man, however, as any one who keeps his eyes open can see, can fail until, like Milton's Satan, he cries, "Myself am hell," or he can succeed until the spiritual world shines through him like the sun through eastern windows.

All great religion sets men at life's central task of grappling with themselves. It has supplied the motive and driving power, the insight and hope, so that men have been able to grapple with themselves successfully. At its height it has led men to the place where they not so much wrestle with themselves as are wrestled with by the Life from whom their spirits came, to be conquered by whom is victory and to serve whom is freedom. And it will be an evil day for the world if ever materialistic philosophy or practical paganism quenches this essential challenge of religion.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

Obedience

I

ONE of our most venerated and farseeing citizens recently remarked that in his eighty years of active life, associated with some of the most stirring events in the commonwealth, he had never seen such an orgy of lawlessness as that through which we are living now. Startled into thoughtfulness by this assertion, I made some interesting discoveries: that I could not recall ever having preached a sermon on obedience; that I could not recall ever having heard a sermon on obedience; that, when I searched volume after volume of modern addresses and sermons, I did not run upon any that dealt with respect for and obedience to authority. There were plenty on freedom, on the emancipation of the individual, on the outgrowing of old restraints, but few, if any, upon the necessity and glory of being mastered by what rightfully masters us. The impression began to sink in that our orgy of lawlessness is not an accident, nor merely a postwar psychological reaction, but that it is the natural fruitage of deep-rooted tendencies

in our thinking which have affected alike our religion and our law.

That lawlessness is rampant needs no long demonstration. Consider the fact that in the United States in the last thirty-five years we have lynched over three thousand people, shooting them, hanging them, burning them, and sometimes distributing pieces of their charred bones for souvenirs. If one wishes to get the full effect of that fact let him not take it sitting comfortably in a peaceable suburban home; let him imagine himself in Tokio giving good Christian admonition to a liberal Japanese about the cruel mistakes of Japan in Korea. When this admirable advice has been delivered, the Japanese, with inimitable courtesy, has his answer ready. "You are entirely right," he says. "We all have lamentable mistakes to regret. By the way, I have forgotten how many people you lynched in your own Christian country last year." What shall we say? We should like to fall back upon the lame excuse that lynching is swift vengeance for one unspeakable crime, but the fact is that scores of people are being lynched who are not even suspected of that special iniquity. We should like to plead the difficulty of dealing with the color line in this country, but the fact is in the last thirty-five years over a thousand white people have been lynched. There is no excuse. Lynching is cruel, uncivilized lawlessness.

Or consider our criminal record. In 1916—it was not an unusual year—Chicago with its two millions and a half of inhabitants had twenty more murders than the whole of Great Britain and Wales with their thirty-eight million people, and in the same year the city of New York had exactly six times as many culpable homicides as the city of London. In the United States in 1916 there were 8372 culpable homicides and 115 executions; in 1917, 7803 culpable homicides and 85 executions; in 1918, 7667 culpable homicides and, once more, 85 executions.

We have heard a great deal about the breakdown of the church, but no breakdown so threatens the foundations of social order today as the collapse of our law. Ex-President Taft is of a judicial and cautious mind, yet even he uses this strong and urgent language: "It is not too much to say that the administration of criminal law in this country is a disgrace to our civilization, and that the prevalence of crime and fraud, which here is greatly in excess of that in European countries, is due largely to the failure of the law and its administration to bring criminals to justice."

The movies, our most popular recreation, are a weather vane to show which way the wind is blowing in the thinking of our people, and, so far as lawlessness is concerned, the direction is obvious. The representatives of the law are habitually at a disadvan-

tage on the screen. The judge, the detective, the policeman come off badly in the plot, and the mere husband is often in ill repute with the audience. But ah! The attractive murderers, the high-minded robbers, the noble crooks, the gracious courtesans! The church is often accused of sentimentality. After watching the cinema, however, one suspects that in this regard it is fairly safe to risk the church. It is clear, however, that outside the church we are having a veritable debauch of public sentimentality expressing itself in silly exaltation of crime.

II

In the United States today probably the most obvious lawlessness with which we deal is the breaking of the Eighteenth Amendment and its enacting laws. If someone insists that the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment was not wise the answer may be assent. One may hate the liquor traffic and desire its obliteration, and yet may feel sure that had we gone on for a decade more with our local-option campaigns and their associated programs of education we should have been further on toward real temperance and ultimate prohibition than we are now.

Nevertheless, the attempt summarily to put down the liquor traffic at one stroke is on our statute books.

It is the law, and no man can convincingly maintain that the majority of the people did not want it there. To say that is to vest our senators and representatives with ideal virtues quite beyond their just desert. It involves picturing them as men of such valiant and sacrificial devotion to total abstinence that in the face of a popular majority, at the risk of losing their seats, they insisted, out of their own impatient idealism, on passing the prohibitory laws and keeping them on the books against all protests. One who believes that must have the innocence of an infant. The truth is that many votes were cast for prohibition, not because our senators and representatives believed in it themselves, but because they well knew that a majority of the people did.

It is undoubtedly justifiable at times to break the law. My grandfather broke one—the Fugitive Slave Law. He deliberately transgressed a Federal enactment which made it illegal to assist an escaping slave to liberty. On stormy nights, aroused by a signal on the windowpane, he would rise and go out to row boatloads of fleeing slaves across the Niagara River into Canada. He conscientiously broke a Federal law because he thought that he ought to obey God rather than men.

Does anyone maintain, however, that bootlegging represents any such self-denying devotion to Chris-

tian principles, that folk are drinking hooch as a sacrificial libation to their high ideals? Recently I saw a man breaking the law. He was proclaiming aloud his right to personal liberty. He had had so much of it that he was not lucid and logical in his argument, but it was obvious that he was endeavoring to cloak transgression of law under the sacred right to personal freedom. One who watched him, however, labored under the strong suspicion that he broke the law, not really for conscience's sake, but for appetite's sake!

It is one thing to put God above law. Once in a great while that may be solemnly, sacrificially necessary. But to put appetite for hard liquor above law is another matter. And the shame of the present situation is that the law is not being chiefly outraged by poor people; it is not they who are supporting half the population of the West Indies. Our lawlessness is mainly the work of men of means, prestige and influence, who ought to know better.

The following is suggested as a necessary element in the loyalty of a good citizen just now:

I hate the liquor traffic and all the damnation that it brings on human life; I recognize the right of the Government, when the majority so wills, to put down the liquor traffic, as it does a contagious disease, even though that involves the right to invade my home and take my child to an isolation hospital; I claim the right

to agitate for the law's rephrasing and amendment, where I think it needs it, that it may be more reasonable and enforceable; but in the meantime I will keep the law.

III

As to the sources from which our personal lawlessness springs, one of them is obviously to be found in the breakdown of authority in the state and the rise of a rampant and selfish individualism. Indeed, this excessive individualism has often been taken as the sign manual of a true American. Mr. John Graham Brooks tells of a dairyman in New Hampshire who, irritated by the strict requirements of cleanliness on which the state milk inspector insisted, broke out in righteous indignation. "Yes," he said, "I have read a good deal in the agricultural paper about this foolishness; but I am an American, and I propose to stay on bein' an American." A very popular idea of one hundred per cent Americanism is involved in such a claim that one must have individual liberty to sell the public milk just as unclean as one feels like selling it. Unless Americanism, however, can be made to mean less individual liberty and more social obligation, the republic is headed in for perilous times.

Across the front of the courthouse in Worcester, Massachusetts, runs in great letters the inscription:

"Obedience to Law is Liberty." That truth is the foundation of the democratic experiment. Long ago our fathers dared to believe in and to undertake a great venture of faith—no greater idea ever dawned on the political consciousness of the race—that not the king but the whole body of the people should make the laws, which then the whole body of the people gladly would obey. That idea, not a wild and wayward individualism, is the true basis of democracy, and the success of it demands loyalty, self-denying devotion and obedience. There is no magic by which the democratic experiment can be saved if mad insistence on individual liberty continues to crowd out sober recognition of social obligation.

If the readers of this article were likely to be economically rebellious against the present social system, tempted to Bolshevism as a philosophy and to physical violence as a method, warnings about the futility of TNT as an agency for social betterment might be in order. But since most of us, so far from being red, are not even pink, we need to recognize that lawlessness is not simply a matter of physical violence. When lawlessness emerges in connection with a strike, rising at times to the dimensions of a massacre, we are shocked. The outrage is visible, violent, murderous. Yet it is worth our while to listen to the excuse which the perpetrators of such

lawless deeds offer, even if we do not easily sympathize with it. "Millions of us," they say, "have nothing to fight with except our fists. Our own combined physical force is the only weapon we possess. The men above us do not need to fight with their fists because they have so many other instruments of warfare—money, influence, soldiers, lawyers, corporations that can control and evade law. How can you blame us when, driven into a corner, we fight with the only thing we have to fight with?"

As an excuse that is unconvincing; as an indictment it is searching. Probably the most perilous lawlessness in this country now is in high circles. There was an old type of lawyer whose glory was that he was a servant of the law. He devoted himself to that master with something of the chivalry which old knights felt for their feudal lords. He honored the law, and to see that it was respected and obeyed was his meat and drink. That kind of lawyer we still have with us and, as always, he is the glory of his great profession. But, like weeds in an untended garden, another kind of lawyer has sprung up. His business is not to interpret the law but to evade it; not to tell us what it means but to make it mean something else; not to show us where the highroad of legal honor runs but where are all the bypaths and crosscuts by which the highroad may be escaped. That kind of lawyer thrives in droves be-

cause other men make it abundantly worth his while. One does not need two eyes to see lawlessness that works, not with fists but with legal fictions, not with TNT but with technicalities, that evades law in ways too clever by a mile, plays ducks and drakes with law, and does it all smoothly and politely, as in Denmark "one may smile, and smile, and be a villain."

No one who possesses any influence at all is likely long to escape this test of character. During the war, to be sure, we were very patriotic. The Government could ask of us nothing too hard. We felt a heavy sense of social obligation. The nation never needed that devotion more than she needs it now. These next years are likely to be critical in her history. We are skirting dangerous precipices. We need a new baptism of social obligation, disciplined living, loyalty to the common good, obedience to law.

IV

Our prevalent lawlessness springs not simply from a breakdown of authority in the state, but from a breakdown of authority in the family. As another has put it, there is just as much authority in the family as there ever was, only the children exercise it. In saying this we do not need to make a weak and wistful appeal for the "good old times." The

family life of older generations often had in it elements which we are fortunate to have escaped. Here, for example, is a letter written in 1803 by a Quaker lady, sending her brother Timothy to live with relatives in another town:

"*Esteemed Friend:* I send my brother Timothy to be under thy charge this winter, while he learns the store business. I know thee will be a faithful guardian, and though it grieveth me to unveil his faults, I must disclose them for thy friendly correction. I have discovered in the lad a worldly and evil spirit, having heard him imitate the unprofitable forms of the light folk of this town—even saying "Mr. Jones" to old Friend Thomas Jones, and though only sixteen years old, he boldly and audaciously directed the woman who maketh his garments to alter their shape. These are bad signs, but I hope thee will prune away such sprouts of sin, and curb these longings after vanity. In other matters thee will find the lad obedient and correct.

"I send thee, Rufus, a present of a hat, which I hope thee will think good enough, as my deceased brother, Isaac, wore it for six years. Rebecca Ann was at meeting last First Day, with a red ribbon on her hat; this caused great excitement. Friends will deal with her, and try to uproot such evil spirit, which flames out of her heart. Everybody is sorry on account of her Aunt Tabitha, that strict model of righteousness, who will not let even a red rose grow in her garden.

"I shall be pleased to hear how thy family does, and also how brother Timothy conducts himself.

"We do not mean to put him upon thee without com-

pensation, and we are willing to pay a liberal board—say $1.50 a week, deducting .25 when he spends Sunday with his Uncle Caleb.

"Wishing thee well, and all thy family . . ."

Not many of us would care to go back to such "good old times." Yet in the best of those old homes, from which some of us came, there was a kind of spiritual authority which we shall lose at our peril. One Saturday morning my father, leaving the house, said to my mother: "You tell Harry that he can cut the grass today—if he feels like it." Then after a few steps, he turned and added: "Tell him that he would better feel like it." Just so! The first part of those directions has had altogether too exclusive control of the training of the younger generation. They could do their duty if they felt like it. They could study, work, behave themselves—if they felt like it. It will be a sad day for our families and for the nation if we cannot recover that second emphasis: *they would better feel like it!*

To be sure, that kind of authority in the home must be spiritually grounded. It can be no mere imposition of arbitrary will. I took that from my father and laughed over it all the while I cut the grass, because he was my closest chum, my best friend, and I had heard him pray for me when I was certain that he meant it. So Carlyle described the strongest spiritual influence of his youth—his

mother's praying. "The highest whom I knew on Earth," he wrote, "I here saw bowed down, with awe unspeakable, before a Higher in heaven: Such things, especially in infancy, reach inwards to the very core of your being."

We are coming closer home to the secret sources of our lawless times. No political maneuvering alone will get us out; nothing but the reëstablishment of the spiritual authority of the American home.

V

Lawlessness has its source not simply in the breakdown of authority within the state and the family, but within the individual as well. When lawless citizenship and lawless homes have been properly assayed we must get back to the root of the matter in lawless character. Dwight L. Moody made famous his definition of character as "what a man is in the dark." What a man is in the dark, however, depends altogether on whether he has something inside his life whose right to command him he acknowledges, and whose commands, even in the dark, he stands ready to obey. Some men we trust absolutely; to know such men is life's most reassuring experience. As Emerson says: "The world is upheld by the veracity of good men; they make the earth wholesome." And always in such men, as the

secret of their reliability, we find an inward sense of honor, sense of duty, sense of God, to which they would subscribe themselves, as our fathers signed their letters: "I am, sir, your most obedient servant."

Obedience is the core of character.

The most tragic sight in the world is young men and women who do not discover that until it is too late. They begin, as youth so often begins, with unspoiled characters and unsmirched reputations and, utterly failing to appreciate their opportunity, by lawless living they throw their chance away. They fail to see that it is far easier to keep character when you have it than to recover it when it is lost.

Much talk about character is taken up with the sins that have been committed, the evil that has been done, and with the pardon and restoration that are waiting for the returning sinner. There ought to be more emphasis on the sins that never have been committed, the impurities that have not yet stained the life, and on the greatness of the opportunity which belongs to a fine youth on that account. Recovery from sin is a terrific process. When the gospel of pardon for the penitent prodigal has been fully appreciated, it still remains true that recovering lost character and lost reputation involves an appalling struggle. Sin has binding power, and the grip of its habits is tremendous. Sin has blinding

power, and eyes once perverted by it do not easily regain the grace of seeing straight. Sin has multiplying power, and each sin spawns other sins like fish in the sea until it seems impossible to be rid of them. Sin has hardening power; it callouses the soul until the spiritual touch which once would have roused us leaves us dead. To get out of sin, when once you are in it, is a terrific process.

When, therefore, one sees a youth, not yet caught, not yet mastered by evil habit, walking at large, a moral freeman, one wonders if he half appreciates the splendor of his opportunity. So many sermons have been preached on the glory of the Prodigal's return; so few upon the glory of his chance before he went away at all.

The most desirable thing in the world is not the home-coming of a prodigal; the most desirable thing is a youth who keeps his character by obedience to the highest that he knows, and never has the bitter struggle of coming back.

It is a great deal easier to use an opportunity when you have it than to regain it when, by lawlessness, it has been thrown away.

VI

Religion has an indispensable function to perform in this building of obedient character. For what-

ever else God may mean, he certainly means that in this universe and in our own lives there is Somebody who ought to be and who proposes to be obeyed.

Almost every aspect of God's significance for human life has been pushed to the fore in our generation, except this. We have made him very amiable, very approachable, even affectionately maternal, and we often have forgotten that, whatever else God means, he represents moral order. He is no friend of undisciplined living.

They say that the Bolsheviki in Moscow held high celebration on last Christmas Day; that they marched through the streets with a stuffed figure marked "Almighty God," at the head of the procession, and then burned "Almighty God" in effigy. Whether the story is true or not, this certainly is clear: if anybody wishes to live an undisciplined life he would better start in by getting rid of God; for so long as he is here the Eternal Right exists which ought to be obeyed.

Nor is this a hard gospel. It is a glorious gospel. The secret of all our material progress has lain in our discovery that the physical universe is a law-abiding system. All scientific advance depends on obedience to law.

And all high character depends on inward obedience to moral law. It is just here that we often miss

the substance of Jesus' character. We are touched by his gentleness, pity, compassion, kindness, but the core of his character lies underneath. "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth"; "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me"; "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother"; "Not my will, but thine, be done." At the center of the Master's life was a glad but tremendous obedience to his Father's will.

Indeed, one of the chief services which the Master has rendered his followers is to redeem obedience from forbidding severity and to make of it a glad and winsome loyalty. He has so exhibited the moral life at its best as to make men fall in love with it. He has said, not "Go! Obey duty, 'Stern Daughter of the Voice of God,'" but "Come! Follow me." He has aroused in men a devotion to himself and a patriotism for his cause which have put into following him the kind of thrill and adventurous joy which soldiers have felt in campaigning with a general for whom they would gladly die. At infinite cost men have obeyed him, as the highest that they knew, but they have thought of him as one, "whose service is perfect freedom."

Above the Average

I

DEMOCRACY is not all clear gain. For one thing, its method of reaching decisions by voting creates the general impression that the majority is right. From a ladies' sewing circle to the assembly of the League of Nations we count heads when we wish a matter settled. The result is that we modern democrats, who would scorn to truckle to an autocrat, truckle to the majority with all the obsequiousness of a courtier before his sovereign. Once the fashions were set by a monarch —the king could do no wrong. If he wore a beard, beards were fashionable; if he wore a ruff to cover a scar, ruffs were the order of the day. Democracy, however, which has largely abolished this mimicry of kings, has for many folk only substituted mimicry of the mob. We do not go through the outward ritual of kneeling to Their Majesties, but in fact we continually bow before the two great sovereigns of

the democratic state—The General Average and The Majority Vote.

In political procedure it doubtless is true that the best way yet discovered to run a government is to elect public servants by popular suffrage. But to grant the wisdom of political democracy is a very different thing from saying that in any decision which calls for spiritual fineness the majority is likely to be right. Upon the contrary, the majority is almost certain to be wrong. Put to popular vote the query, which they enjoy the better, ragtime and jazz on the one side or Chopin's Nocturnes on the other, and where would the majority be? Put to popular vote the query, which interests them more, the movies or Hamlet and King Lear, and where would the majority be? Which are more popular, novels written by animated fountain pens that turn out love stories by the gross, or the great classics of our English speech? The idea that the voice of the people is the voice of God is mostly nonsense.

The fact is that in any realm where judgment calls for spiritual fineness only the minority who are above the average are ever right. And because a man is always tempted to live down to the average of his social group, a searching test of character is involved in one's relationship with this dead level of public opinion and practice. A professor in one of our leading universities, questioned as to the peril

which most threatens our young men, answered, "Law-morality." He meant that they are content with the legal standard as their ideal. They desire to be no worse than the enforced average, but they feel no call to be any better. They are as good as is necessary to "get by." They cannot meet that searching test which every democratic state presents to its members: courage to live above the average and ahead of the time. In the last article we pleaded for obedience to law; in this one we insist that that is not enough.

II

The kind of courage involved in living above the average is indispensable to great character. Every organized form of human life acts on us in two ways: it levels up our worst, and it levels down our best. Government, for example, is simply the organization of a general human average into a machinery of power. The benefits of this are obvious: government forces those who are below the average to live up to it or else suffer the consequences. But it also tends to force those who are above the average to live down to it or else suffer the consequences. For this reason the prisons of history have been filled with two kinds of people, the worst and the best. The death cell in Athens had in it the scum of

Attica, but also Socrates, the wisest soul in Greece. The jail in Philippi had in it the scoundrels of the countryside, but Paul as well, the apostle of the Christ. Bedford Jail was filled with debauchees, but there, too, John Bunyan dreamed "The Pilgrim's Progress." And Worcester Jail contained the riffraff of the country, but George Fox, too, father of the Quakers and a man of peace.

Even in our own day it has not always been easy for governments to be sure when they were locking up our saints and when our sinners. For always there have been two ways of falling foul of a human government: one by being a rogue and the other by being a prophet. The governmental standard is like a Procrustean bed: it does call for the stretching out of those that are too short, but it also calls for the lopping off of those that are too long.

This double activity of human averages should be impressed upon Christians every time they think of Calvary. Three crosses stood on Calvary—on two of them hung robbers; on the third hung Christ. The Roman government, like all organized forms of human life, disliked two kinds of people—outlaws, who were below the level and would not live up to it, and saviors, who were above the level and would not live down to it. We may well ask ourselves where we would have stood with reference to Calvary—below the average, with the outlaws, con-

demned by the general body of public opinion; on the average with the multitude, whose organized public opinion slew alike robbers and Christ; or above the average, with Christ himself. Only, if we had been with him, it would have meant then, as now, living above the level and ahead of the time.

Being a Christian on this basis is serious business. It ought to be serious business. "Christian" is too fine a word to be misrepresented as it often is. For here, as elsewhere, many different meanings can be put into a single phrase. We say "I am hungry and thirsty," and we say it cheerily, thinking of the dinner soon to come. But when a man who had lain two days and nights in No Man's Land crawled into the first-line trench, he also said "hungry and thirsty." Same words—different thing! We speak of "sacrifice," and by it we generally mean the surrender of some minor convenience for another's comfort. But a missionary in Central China, living year after year amid the pressure of an alien civilization on a frontier post where he hardly hears his mother tongue, is also sacrificing. Same word—different thing!

So folk call themselves Christians and often mean by it no more than the dead level of average respectability. Such discipleship could hardly have contented him who said "What do ye more than

others?" "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," and who, himself, rather than live down to the level, went to the cross. In the intention of Jesus, to be a Christian obviously involved being above the average and ahead of the time.

III

When, therefore, we have recognized that lawlessness is a rampant peril, we must also see close alongside it the multitudes of people who are merely law-abiding, who accept the dead level of general mediocrity as standard, who are no better than the enforced average, and who in consequence are living alike for themselves and for the social welfare utterly unsatisfactory lives.

In organized business, for example, it is not enough thus to be leveled up to the average; if that is all, one may be sure that he is being leveled down to the average. For business tends to work both ways on everyone whom it touches. That business levels up men's worst seems plain. Japan needs a dominant merchant class to improve her ethics, and for a simple reason. All people copy the virtues of their most admired class, and for generations warriors have occupied that position in Japan. The virtues of war are loyalty and valor, and in those

qualities no nation today surpasses the Japanese. But the virtues of war are not truthfulness and straightforwardness; wars are largely run by stratagem and subtlety and subterfuge. While, therefore, truthfulness is honored in Japan, it is not honored so highly as valor and loyalty are, nor so highly as it will be when the business group has become dominant and commercial virtues rise correspondingly in the scale. For when the sins against honesty and truthfulness which run through our business life have been properly appraised and condemned, it still remains true that business cannot be done on a large scale without an immense amount of honesty and truthfulness to do business with. Business unquestionably levels up.

Like every other organized form of human life, however, it also levels down. It often makes men hard, selfish, avaricious, even cruel. It often sanctions a double standard of morality by which we run our lives in home and neighborhood on one set of principles and change gear entirely when we reach the office or the factory. It continually causes men to withstand public movements of reform essential to the common weal, because they threaten for a time to disturb the interests of property. It makes men content with conditions, like the twelve-hour shift in industry, that are evil, because they themselves succeed in profiting by them. The down-

drag of the competitive and profiteering spirit in business on the best in men and women is one of the most obvious facts in the modern world.

Millet, the French artist, who gave us The Angelus, was addressed at his wedding dinner by his grandmother, who said to him: "Remember, my François, that you are a Christian before you are a painter. . . . Never sacrifice on the altar of Baal." And Millet in his answer said: "Even if they cover the canvas with gold and ask me to paint a 'St. Francis possessed by the devil,' I will promise you never to consent!"

Everybody needs to take that vow—that he will not sell out. We ministers need to take it. Men in politics and women in society, and those who live under the terrific pressure of self-interest in the business world need to make that vow their own, that they will not sell out. What is finer in history than a soul that is not for sale?

As for our industrial and business problems in their social aspects, no mere suppression of lawlessness will solve them. Probably most readers of this article desire, as the writer does, the retention of the capitalistic system until we can get something plainly better to put in its place, and nothing plainly better appears on the horizon just now. Certainly, no experiments being tried with socialism make it look in the least alluring. But this serious truth

also faces us, that, whether we have anything better to replace it or not, the capitalistic system will not easily maintain itself unless it can be so organized and directed as to serve better than it has been serving the whole body of the people.

A lay leader of a men's class in a metropolitan church recently refused to allow industrial problems to be discussed before his group because, said he, "the situation in the United States is all right—ninety-eight per cent right."

What absurdity! With gigantic conflicts between capital and labor catching the general body of the public like victims between two millstones and grinding the life out of them; with the most intimate concerns of the people's life, such as coal, transportation, and food, settled not by the people's elected representatives but in private conference of labor leaders and captains of industry; with the fear of unemployment constantly haunting millions of our families like a ghost, and the fact of unemployment periodically leaping upon them like a devil—ninety-eight per cent right? In this situation, to repress lawlessness is necessary, but it is not enough. Nothing will prove sufficient except an increasing body of men and women who refuse to content themselves with the accepted standards, who see possibilities which the multitude have not yet seen, who dare to believe in them, experiment

with them, work for them, who count it one of the tests of their character to be above the average and ahead of the time.

IV

St. Martin of Tours, so runs the legend, was seated in his cell when a knock came at the door and a lordly presence entered. "Who are you?" said the saint, and the figure answered, "I am the Savior." But the saint was suspicious, as saints must be in this wicked world, and said: "Where, then, are the prints of the nails?" And the devil vanished.

This much truth lies on the surface of the legend: saviorhood, which is the highest form of character, is always so associated with being above the average that it never yet has been able to avoid sacrifice. Even to live above the average of organized religion itself is costly. For organized religion, like organized government and organized business, while it continually levels up our worst, also levels down our best. That it levels up our worst seems clear. Some folks suspect that people inside the churches and people outside are entirely alike. One who during the war spoke before all sorts of audiences about the Allied cause and associated measures of relief, must question that. An audience in a moving-picture theater represents about the dead level of

the human average in America. If one notes the appeals that catch on there, the arguments that convince, the illustrations that are liked, the opinions that are applauded, and then goes to a church to speak, he sees the difference. The church has unquestionably leveled up.

But it also levels down. Organized religion did to death the prophets of Israel, slew Socrates, helped to put the cross on Calvary, and all through the centuries has fought with vehement hatred against its own pathfinders and seers. Today, as always happens when a supreme ideal endeavors to get itself expressed in human institutions, the general average of organized religion is lower than the best. A great deal of popular religion represented in the church is a halfway affair.

Men find their life made up of many disparate and unrelated elements. They work and eat and sleep; they play golf and read books and go to the theater; they travel and visit—and just as they pass from one of these to another with no thought that one should control all the rest, so sometimes they add one more element and go to church. There is a sense of mystery in them which the church satisfies, an esthetic response to the dignity of an historic faith. But out of this experience also they pass with no more idea that it is meant to control all life than they feel when they pass from reading books

to playing tennis. Religion is one of life's afterthoughts, an extra, like cuttings from which dressmakers make fancy additions after the general body of the cloth has been used for warmth and protection.

Anyone, therefore, who is in earnest about his religion has always to struggle against the downdrag of this halfway, mediocre kind of religion. To a man in earnest God can never be a halfway matter; he will be nothing at all or else he will be the regulative center of life. For every man does have a regulative center. With many it is self-interest. Friendships are formed because they serve self-interest; marriage is contracted for the sake of self-interest; vocation is chosen, not for service but for self-interest; even when war breaks out and millions of men pour out their blood like water in sacrifice, some see the whole situation in terms of their self-interest. Such folk are not always thinking of themselves; they think of all sorts of things as other people do: but whenever there is a decision to be made, an attitude to be taken, instinctively, often unconsciously, the whole matter is referred to the arbitrament of self-interest.

To be a religious man in earnest means that the regulative center of life is not self-interest, but fellowship with the Highest and a sense of responsibility to him. That is one of the inner meanings

of prayer. A fine English Christian has said that his prayer more and more reduces itself to two words—"Now, Lord." He means that in the pressure of the day's work he can make swift reference to the supreme court of his life.

That kind of experience is too familiar to be called unreal. A young man falls in love with a high-minded girl; marries her; the children come; the home becomes the center of his life. He does not think of it all the time, but it is always there. Nothing in his life escapes its influence; it permeates his plans; it is the nucleus of his ambitions and hopes; and, as for his character, it is the strongest protection that he has, so powerful and controlling are the influences that flow from it against all that is shameful and unclean. So central and controlling also is a genuine, first-rate, religious fellowship with God—what a sextant is to the sailor, the keynote to the singer, the color tone to the painter, sun time to our uncertain watches. But a man who is to possess that experience must make it one of the first items in his determination that he will not think down and will not live down to the general average of organized religion.

Indeed, when such vital religion meets formalism and obscurantism in the church, the cost is sometimes heavy. The peril most to be feared about the ministry in this generation lies here.

Our innermost temptation is to reduce ourselves to some denomination's lowest common denominator, to sink to the ecclesiastical average, to help to put down the worst in men, but at the same time to miss the best, lacking vision to see what the Most High would reveal to us, and then lacking courage to say what we see, until, like other ministers of organized religion in history, we help to put three crosses on Calvary. The hope of the church lies in leadership above the average and ahead of the time.

One cannot think long about such courageous nonconformity without remembering Jesus. In our imaginations of him we have smoothed him out, tamed him down, conveniently forgotten what manner of man he really was, until his tremendous figure has grown pallid, pacific, and undisturbing. We are always doing that with the great figures of the past. We have mental stencils of respectability, and we paint over the great personalities of the race, leaving nothing visible save our conventionalities.

Renan described Jesus as a "lovely character" with a "transporting countenance." Apparently no one who actually knew Jesus would have thought such terms adequate—certainly not the Pharisees facing his fearless indignation or the moneychangers fleeing alike his scourge and his stinging words. One finds it difficult to imagine the mob in Pilate's

court crying "Crucify him!" that they might be rid of a lovely character with a transporting countenance. Rather they were trying to get rid of the leading nonconformist of his day, who had said that he would not put his new wine into their old wine-skins nor sew his Gospel as a new patch on their old garments. Whatever else one may find in the Master, one surely cannot miss his courageous nonconformity.

This does not mean that anyone who follows him should join the first minority he sees and become a nonconformist for the sake of being one. Minorities are not right just because they are minorities. Some minorities are intolerable nuisances. Joining a minority and becoming a nonconformist requires spiritual discrimination. If a man lacks it he would better join the majority; he is far safer there. Joining the minority is like being married. It is not to be entered into "unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God."

This, however, is also true, that no man need ever expect to remind the world of the Master unless he is prepared courageously to live above the average and ahead of the time.

V

It is not, however, in these organized forms of the general average of which we have been speaking—government, business, and church—that this test presses most intimately on some of us. The immediate social group in the midst of which our daily life is carried on also has its average, and, while we may not have evolved from chameleons, a strong family likeness is suggested by our most almost uncanny tendency to adapt our color to our background.

The hardest task assigned to anyone on earth is living above the average of his own home. Sometimes that is necessary. Some family groups are like canal boats that have to be pulled if they are to get anywhere. Left alone they stand still; there is no inward, spiritual driving power; they have to be hauled, and it is weary work hauling them.

The difficulty involved here lies in the fact that in all our more intimate relationships with family and friends we feel tremendously the pressure of the herd instinct. Psychoanalysts tell us that together with the preservation of life and the attraction of sex this instinct to follow with the herd is the most powerful force in our subconscious life. Certainly we know without the help of psychoanalysis that it is immensely powerful.

When we care for any group of people, as we do for our family and friends, we have put into their hands an almost irresistible influence over us. We respond with telepathic swiftness to their words and emotions. What happens to them happens to us; what they think and feel we contagiously receive; when their opinions and practices are concerned, we are infinitely sensitive and impressionable. Because, above all else, we instinctively wish to please them, the most stinging cut we can receive is their disapproval. The criticism of a stranger is easily borne, but not the censure of a friend. When, therefore, conflict comes between our best conscience and the general average of our inner social group, we face the need for courage in its acutest form. We know then that to possess the strength of will to live above the average is one of the primary and most searching tests of character.

VI

This sort of courage in all the applications we have made of it is represented on Calvary. The organized government of Jesus' day, the organized business life which he disturbed when he cleared the temple of the moneychangers, the organized religion, and the general level of his family and friends all represented an average with which he refused

to be content. Discipleship to him never can be adequately understood without involving his insistence on superior standards and on superior courage. We sing about the cross today,

In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time.

When, however, Jesus first bore the cross, no one had ever thought of singing about it. When first they put the cross upon his back and he stumbled down the narrow, ill-smelling lanes of Jerusalem amid the gaping, mocking crowds out toward Golgotha, to have sung about the cross would have been unheard-of madness. Cicero uses three words about it in which, even if one does not understand the Latin, he can feel the weight of agony: "*crudelissimum deterrimumque supplicium*"—"the most cruel and terrific punishment." That was the cross when Jesus bore it.

Moreover, we never have seen crucifixion; with us it is an imagined agony; but Jesus had often seen it. Again and again by the roadsides he had seen crosses and their victims, the long-drawn-out and pitiless agony that crucifixion involved. That last evening, therefore, when Judas stole away to betray him, that night when under the olive trees he wrestled with his own soul, that morning in Pilate's court when he heard the crowd cry "Crucify him!" he

knew what it meant down to its last unutterable detail. Yet, rather than live down to the average and not up toward God, he went through with it.

In a day when there is no hope for our civilization except in superior character, Christians should recall that the cross of which they sing means something besides singing—sheer courage to live above the average and ahead of the time.

Harnessing the Caveman

I

MANY people listen, perhaps allured but still unconvinced, to the presentation of high ideals of spiritual quality and life, and the reason is the caveman. Young people in particular often visualize their moral problem in some such way as this: on the one side is the ideal life with its purity, its self-forgetfulness, its fine awareness of things invisible, and on the other side are the primitive instincts—pugnacity, egotism, sensuality, the caveman within, and between these two there is an irreconcilable hostility. Thus morally split and bifurcated, with the ancient savage frowning on the potential saint, folk try to live, supposing that such is man's inevitable estate.

Some, to be sure, endeavor to simplify their disunited lives by throwing their whole weight upon one side of the division against the other, but seldom with entire success. They try to be whole-

hearted cavemen, to give loose rein to their primitive instincts, but even if they do not encounter the laws of man they face that higher half of themselves, their Dr. Jekyll who regards their Mr. Hyde with ashamed contempt. Or if they side with their higher half, they often see nothing better to do with their primitive instincts than to restrain them, thrust them down into their hold and shut the hatch on them. Such folk always have a smoldering mutiny on board. Even on days of quiet sailing they can hear the grumbling of their barbarian instincts in the hold, and sometimes those long repressed mutineers break loose and seize the quarterdeck and there is trouble to pay before they are got back again.

Most folk are in one of these two classes: barbarians with penitent and wistful interludes, or good men with unconquered mutinies.

Yet both are failing to meet one of the elemental tests of character: harnessing the caveman. For our primitive instincts are neither to be surrendered to nor to be stamped on and cast out. They are about the most valuable part of our native equipment. They are our original motive force, and our business with them is not to crush them but to expand their uses, to organize them around new purposes and direct them to new aims. In the jungle, for example, the hunting instinct inevitably

developed. Hunger evoked it. Men had to hunt if they would live and, because nature associates satisfaction with her necessary operations, men enjoyed the hunting to which need prompted them. Now, however, when jungle days are long outgrown and hunting in its old form is no longer necessary, the hunting instinct does not stop, but is lifted up, enlarged, centered around new purposes; it becomes driving power in some of the noblest achievements of the race. When Magellan circumnavigated the earth, he was hunting for the truth about the globe. When Galileo swept the heavens with his telescope, he was hunting for a larger vision of the universe. When Pasteur, in spite of his paralysis, sought for the secret of disease, he was hunting a remedy for human ills. When St. Augustine prayed, "I will seek Thee, that my soul may live," he was hunting for spiritual resources without which life is not worth living. To what fine meanings and noble aims can this primitive hunting instinct be expanded!

The difference between the best lives and the worst does not lie in the possession of strong primitive instincts by the low and the lack of them by the high. The difference lies in the purposes around which those primitive instincts are organized and the ends to which they are directed. A dog's loyalty to his master is so fair a thing that

unforgetable stories are told about its depth and constancy. Yet a dog's loyalty to his master began with a wolf's loyalty to his pack. That was its starting point. For primitive instincts can be transformed, and that fact presents to human character one of its elemental problems and one of its finest hopes.

II

Ambition, the desire to overtop our fellows, to have more than other people have, to be more than other people are, has left a bloodstained trail across history. It began back in the jungle where men had to conquer or die. Either this chief would overthrow that chief and seize his wives and his estate, or else that chief would overthrow this chief and seize his. Under such circumstances, when a man was born with a powerful endowment of physical and mental force, there was but one channel in which that overflowing stream of personal energy could flow—ambition to surpass and overcome.

When this primitive instinct, ingrained by immemorial necessary, passed from the jungle into history, the consequences were terrific. Pierre Fritel's picture, "The Conquerors," tells the story. Between two rows of the piled dead, men stark and naked, women with cold babies at their breasts, amid the bleak desolation of old battlefields, the

conquerors appear, Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon, and their ambitious company, riding on horseback amid bloody scenes to their supremacy.

Nevertheless, in spite of the ruinous meanings of ambition, none of us who amounts to anything lacks it. That instinct is an indispensable part of our native endowment; it is one of the most powerful driving forces of our lives. Let the ambition to discover the North Pole lay hold on Peary and no obstacles could defeat him. For over twenty years he made it his ambition to plant the Stars and Stripes at the North Pole, until, as he said, "I long ago ceased to think of myself save as an instrument for the attainment of that end." If a child were born in one of our homes lacking ambition, we should be seriously worried: he would not be all there. Whatever we may be doing with that instinct, it is in us all and more than once, when it has cracked its whip, we have done some of our best work.

The attitude of idealistic teachers toward this deep-seated and powerful element in our nature has often been one of severe repression. They have condemned it utterly as a curse, to be cast out and trodden under foot. Such an attitude is historically represented in old monasteries where men turned their backs on this world's ambitions and hopes, and counted themselves holy for so doing..

That same attitude is represented in some forms of evangelicalism, as in hymns like,

Oh, to be nothing, nothing.

The idea behind that familiar conception of Christianity is that ambition is to be crushed, and the consequence of that attitude has been a pallid and sickly kind of Christianity. If a man prays too hard, "Oh, to be nothing, nothing," he may get exactly what he asks.

When, however, one turns to those great lives which have been the glory of the Christian movement, it is plain that they are handling ambition in another way altogether. William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was a man whose figure looms the larger the longer we know it, as mountains look greater when we retreat from them. But his own phrasing of the motive power which drove him down into the slums of Darkest England to work for folk whom everybody else had forgotten, was this: "the impulses and urgings of an undying ambition" to save souls. Ambition is not something to be cast out; it is to be lifted and expanded, oriented around new aims, and devoted to great purposes.

The greatest saints are always made of the same material as the greatest sinners. Ignatius Loyola, the dashing, gallant, adventurous cavalier, becomes Ignatius Loyola, the fearless, ambitious, militant

reformer, with all the endowments of his old life reorganized around Christian purposes in the new. He threw none of his equipment away. He kept it all and used it.

For we can employ powers like ambition in many different ways. A man may be ambitious to conquer a neighboring chief and steal his wives, or he may be ambitious to make a city neighborhood through his settlement house a more decent place in which to live. A man may be ambitious to be the richest man in the county, or he may be ambitious to make his business a blessing to every man who works for him and a public service to every customer who buys from him. A man may be ambitious to be saluted as Rabbi in the market-place, or he may be ambitious to lay his life, like the prophet's, on the lives of those whom he teaches and breathe into them the breath of life.

When Mackay, the missionary, reached Uganda in Africa, the difference between him and the natives was not that he lacked ambition and they had it. He had more ambition than all of them put together or else he would not have been there—ambition to make Uganda one more province in the Kingdom of Christ. These primitive instincts are too valuable to throw away. They are meant to be developed, reorganized and rededicated, and the degree to which that has been achieved is one of

the primary tests of character. The ideal man, as Jacob Boehme said, has all his fiery energies harnessed to the service of the light.

III

This truth applies to combativeness. The centuries are sick with it, and its trail across our generation's life has made for us the bloodiest days in human history. It began in the jungle where men had to fight wild beasts or die, where they could not have survived had not nature endowed them with capacity for the swift rise of pugnacity. We still have in our bodies the left-overs of that old necessity. When we are tired one of the surest symptoms of our fatigue is that we begin imagining controversies with other people, making up in our minds contentious conversations with folk whom we do not like, writing imaginary letters swelling with rage or bitter with sarcasm. The reason lies deep in our history. Our fatigued bodies crave stimulant and, if there is no real fight on, our bodies persuade our minds to imagine one so that the glands may discharge the old fluid which used so swiftly to prepare our fathers for a fight. So deep-seated in us is the instinct of pugnacity!

When one thinks of this combative spirit in relation with the Christian Gospel, in what sharp con-

trast do the two things stand! One's first impression is that Christianity can have nothing to do with combativeness except to cast it out. It is ruinous, disruptive, wrong. It has plunged the world in blood. Yet one cannot help remembering that when Martin Luther walked into the imperial council hall of Charles V at Worms to meet his enemies, a famous general tapped him on the shoulder and said, "My poor monk! my poor monk! thou art marching to make a stand, the like of which I, and many a general, in our gravest battles have never made." Combativeness has meaning in realms where physical violence has been left far behind. "When I am angry," said Luther, "I can pray well and preach well." He did not cast his caveman out; he made his caveman work for him.

Pugnacity expressing itself in physical violence is sheer savagery and in its organized form in war it is the most threatening peril that the world faces. Civilization cannot abide its continuance. But pugnacity has other expressions besides that. Combativeness may be in a soldier driving his bayonet into the abdomen of an enemy or it may be in a group of scientists like those who are now stalking yellow fever in the five places on this planet where it breeds, determined to win a great fight for humanity. Combativeness may appear in a gunman, swaggering, contentious and violent, or in an

educator who has declared war on the ignorance of a Chinese province, and against all obstacles is building schools with which to win his fight. Combativeness may shoot up a frontier train in a drunken brawl or it may go into the pulpit to attack a social evil like slavery, saying in Henry Ward Beecher's words, "All the bells that God has put in my belfry shall ring!"

Indeed, the only way to get rid of one kind of pugnacity is to exalt the other. As Hinton said, the only way to abolish war is to make peace heroic.

IV

Indeed, it is a strange mistake to suppose that these primitive endowments of man's nature, obviously needed in war, are not just as indispensable in peace. Those of us who were with the armies in France saw magnificent exhibitions of courage. Yet some of those soldiers today, carrying on in civil life with broken health, shattered nerves, lost limbs, need more courage than it took to see them through at St. Mihiel. Indeed, even if they escaped the bullets and the gas and came out whole and now are facing in their personal and family life only the sort of experiences that soon or late fall on most of us, the loss of children, the desperate illness of those whom we love better than ourselves, the collapse of for-

tune that forces a man to go down to the bottom and start over again, one suspects that more sheer courage is demanded than the Argonne required.

We are wrong when we suppose that courage receives its supreme exhibition in war. More patient courage is represented in the "hundred neediest cases" of The New York Times than in most battles. Many elements in war help people to be courageous —the mass movements, the pride of patriotism, the panoply of uniform and parade, the long exalted traditions of war's glory; all these help to create and sustain courage. Moreover, war is popular while it is being waged; orators defend it, songs praise it, the whole nation is shouting for it; and the most unimportant doughboy in the trenches knows that news of the enterprise in which he shares is awaited by millions with excited interest. Then, too, there is companionship in war; sacrifice and suffering are gregarious, not solitary, and no man goes into a tight place without knowing that all around him are thousands daring the same.

But in ordinary life multitudes face situations where courage is desperately needed, where no pomp of circumstance sustains their bravery, no interested public is concerned to see them win, and no fellowship surrounds their solitary fortitude. Blind folk fighting a brave battle, sick folk nourishing a forlorn yet patient hope, poor folk sustaining

crushing poverty, bereaved folk covering broken hearts with the beautiful hypocrisy of smiling faces —who says that the spirit of combative courage is not needed? If ever a man is tempted, in a low mood, to give up hope about humanity, let him think upon the courage which human life on every side of him exhibits—the quiet, constant, sustained heroic courage in obscure and forgotten places where nobody sees!

No great moral life is possible without this spirit which enabled Paul to say, "I have fought the good fight." A young man in one of our colleges once sought an interview with Dr. Robert E. Speer. The youth came in shamefacedly, looked around to be sure that no one could hear or see, and handed Dr. Speer a letter. Seeing that it was in a girl's handwriting, Dr. Speer returned it, but the youth insisted that he read it through. It ran like this: "I know all about your life at —— College, and I want to tell you what I think about you. You and I have known one another all our lives, and we have been good friends; but I think you are a coward and I think that I ought to tell you so." When Dr. Speer looked up the boy's lips were trembling. "That is not the worst," he said. "She tells the truth." President of his class, playing on the football eleven, he was going to pieces because he was a coward. He knew what was right but he

lacked courage to stand by it. As Samuel Johnson said, "Unless a man has that virtue he has no security for preserving any other."

"Sinner" is an old word and for some people the teeth are gone from it. But there is another word which one craves the chance to use about certain folk who are welching in the moral fight. They are cowards. They came from fine families, they have fine traditions, they know their duty, their sense of honor has not lost its voice. But they are cowards.

The ideal life is not soft. It has harnessed the caveman and put him to use. It has belted ambition and combative courage into the achievement of stable and useful character. It has caught the meaning of Walt Whitman's brusque lines:

You there, impotent, loose in the knees,
Open your scarf'd chops till I blow grit within you.

V

One of the faults in much popular religion springs from the endeavor to construct the religious life out of our negative and passive virtues and to neglect the mastery and use of our vigorous native endowments. As a result, we get a religion characterized by dullness, apathy, feebleness.

My friend, who considers himself interestingly irreligious, was once assailing religion with considerable dash and spirit. In effect he was saying that faith is an opiate, that men drug themselves with it, become sleepy, complacent and comfortable through the use of it, and that their main object in going to church is to be sprayed once more with spiritual cocaine so that they may feel less acutely the ills of life and the miseries of men. As he thus talked on, my mind rehearsed the life stories of some of these religious folk whom he was thus berating, whose faith had been to them so comfortable and benumbing an anesthetic. I thought of Hugh Latimer on his way to the stake to be burned for his faith, saying to his companion in martyrdom, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." Raymond Lull, sustaining with incredible resolution his labors among the Mohammedans, and his ultimate martyrdom; Adoniram Judson, the missionary, lying for seventeen months in the King of Ava's prisons and emerging just as unbeaten and twice as determined as he was before; John Howard, the prison reformer, who made as adventurous an expedition into the dark continent of Europe's prisons as ever Livingstone did into Africa,—such lives came into memory and others

whose biographies never will be written but whom some of us know well. Most of all I thought of the supreme Figure in the history of religion and of the way his fearless life moved with persistent purpose through calumny, hatred and frustration to the brutality of the cross. And when my friend had finished disclosing his theory of religion as an anesthetic, I said some things to him in straight Anglo-Saxon.

Certainly the great exemplars of religion have never acted as though they were under the influence of an opiate.

So far as popular religion is concerned, however, my friend has something on his side. How much of our commonplace religious life is pulseless, unadventurous, and timid! In the country on a summer Sunday, when the quiet of the week's first day falls over farm and woodland, and the church bells peal their charming, lazy call to worship, how restful is the scene! And if one asks the explanation of this unearthly quiet which has fallen on man's work, the answer is "Religion." Even in great cities, where the machinery of life does not stop and throngs never pause, the church means to many people chiefly a place of relaxation from the strain of life. As in a crowded drawing-room, amid the clamor of eager conversation, a call of "Hush!" is heard and, slowly growing quieter, the crowd hears

a voice singing and is silent, so religion still comes to many lives amid the week's overstrain and turbulence, and its chief significance is passivity and quiet.

No one who rightly estimates the need of men for inward serenity will belittle this aspect of religion's meaning. But there surely is a contrast sharp and unmistakable between this idea of religion and some of the characteristic attitudes of Jesus. When he cried, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me," he clearly was not administering an opiate. He was calling a band of young men to an adventure—one of the most costly and significant that ever captured the imagination and allegiance of men. Pizarro, the Peruvian explorer, once faced his soldiers on a day when their enterprise had run into perilous hazard. With his sword's point he drew a line on the sand from east to west and, turning to the south, he said to his followers, "Friends and comrades! on that side are toil, hunger, nakedness, the drenching storm, desertion, and death; on this side, ease and pleasure. There lies Peru with its riches; here, Panama and its poverty. Choose, each man, what best becomes a brave Castilian. For my part I go to the south." That sounds extraordinarily like the appeal of Jesus. On a sleepy Sunday morning, with a listless service and

an apathetic sermon, one too easily may forget that the driving power of Christianity has lain in the courageous and combative Personality who founded it, the adventurous faith which has sustained it, and the brave people who have been its glory.

VI

To be sure, the transformation of primitive instincts is at times exceedingly difficult. The sexual instinct, not finding normal and legitimate expression, can be translated into artistic and social creativeness, but it is not easy. The instinct of fear, indispensable in jungle life if man was to escape his enemies, has to be elevated into respect for equals and reverence for superiors. Selfishness must be transformed by enlarging the idea of what the self is, expanding the personality until it takes in our friends, our community, our nation, our world, so that one does not need to stamp upon his self, but can say,

To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Needless to say, this transformation is not easy.

Moreover, not only is the problem in itself difficult, it is needlessly and cruelly complicated by un-

toward social conditions which make almost impossible the reorganization of old instincts around high purposes. There are some lives that never will have a fair chance to achieve this goal until their social circumstances can be changed. A gunman, for example, has been called "the genius of the slums." In a slum neighborhood a boy is born magnificently endowed with the old native instincts—ambition, pugnacity, adventurousness, self-regard. In the slums, however, they find few natural channels to flow in where they will do anybody any good. They find perverse and primitive expression. They may land their owner in Sing-Sing or the death chair.

Exactly the same kind of boy, however, with the same endowment of native instincts, may be born in a good home and may easily become a blessing to the world. Decent channels are provided for his powers. Ambitious for the victory of good causes, a valiant moral warrior for the right, a pioneer in new social enterprises, with an expanded personality that calls all men brothers, he has a fair chance to beat his swords into ploughshares and his spears into pruning hooks.

Difficult as the problem is in itself, however, and complicated as it is by adverse circumstances, the solution of it still remains one of the central tests of character. Until it is met a man is doomed to live a disunited life at cross-purposes with itself.

Part of him frustrates the rest of him. And one of the great tasks of all true education, social reform, and religion combined, is so to present to men and make possible for men those aims in life which are worth serving, that men may choose them, love them, become patriots for them, organize their lives around them, and so harness all their fiery energies to the service of the light.

Magnanimity

I

A MINISTER, serving a church in Brooklyn in the days of Henry Ward Beecher, tells me that he knew a man who hated Beecher bitterly, even saying that he would not go across the street to hear him preach. Later, however, he came to be the famous orator's devoted friend, and his explanation of the change was brief and simple: whenever a man did Beecher an ill turn, Beecher was not happy until he had done the offender a good turn. It came to be a whimsical proverb in Brooklyn, "If you want a favor from Beecher, kick him!"

We are presented here with a test of character not easy to meet. For while our moral stamina undoubtedly is expressed in the aggressive and militant virtues with which we positively tackle life, most of us feel a severer strain on our spiritual quality when life tackles us. He is a great man indeed who is great, not only when he indents the world,

but when he bears with grace and magnanimity the hostile, irritating impact of the world on him. If a man fails here, what a multitude of resentments he can collect in a few years! If he lets the slights and criticisms dig in, cherishes the insults, ingratitudes and wrongs, he can soon cover his soul with a mass of nettles. Sometimes in the confessional, when a life is opened to me, a sad sight is displayed —remembered discourtesies, hostilities and ingratitudes are everywhere; innumerable ranking grudges infest the mind; open a door anywhere and, behold, a resentment! The very amplitude of our vocabulary in this realm bears witness to the commonness of the experience. How many people are habitually peeved, piqued, nettled, miffed, provoked, irritated and incensed!

Characters in other respects spacious and admirable often fail before this test of magnanimity. Michelangelo was no small man, but when Messer Biagio da Cesena, the Pope's Master of Ceremonies, said that one of his pictures, with its nude figures, was more fit for a place of debauchery than for the Pope's chapel, he was thoroughly peeved. He drew Messer Biagio's portrait to the life and placed him in hell with horns on his head and a serpent twisted round his loins. And he enjoyed a vindictive triumph when Messer Biagio, angry at the laughter of his friends, appealed to the Pope and the Pope

replied: "Had the painter sent you to purgatory, I would have used my best efforts to get you released; but I exercise no influence in hell."

Dante, too, was a great character, but his Divine Comedy rankles with abuse of his foes. He dipped his pen in ink, as Browning said, to print the stigma on his enemy's brow and let "the wretch go festering through Florence."

That it is natural thus to collect grudges is obvious, but even those who so defend it must admit that whenever we meet a character that does not indulge in resentment we recognize moral greatness. Stanton called Lincoln "a low, cunning clown," nicknamed him "the original gorilla," said that Du Chaillu was a fool to wander all the way to Africa in search of what he could so easily have found at Springfield, Illinois. Then Lincoln, who knew well what Stanton had said, made Stanton Secretary of War because he was the best man for the place. Years afterward that same Stanton stood at the bedside of the martyred President in the little room across the street from Ford's theater and, looking at the silent face, said, "There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen." A large part of Lincoln's hold on our affections is due to his magnanimity. "You have more of that feeling of personal resentment than I have," he said on one occasion. "Perhaps I have too little of it,

but I never thought it paid." There is a new beatitude to which, when they see it incarnate, men always pay tribute: Blessed is the life that does not collect resentments.

The plain fact is that grudge-bearing sensitiveness is one of the meanest and most subtle forms of egotism. We may be selfish in doing positively unkind deeds, cherishing anti-social ambitions, indulging in financial niggardliness and greed, but we are just as likely to be selfish in displaying easily wounded vanity and pride. The supersensitiveness that continually is being hurt and, once hurt, irascibly cherishes a grudge; the bare nerve of self that waits only to be touched to writhe and, writhing, tingles with rancor toward the annoyer; the evil eye that watches with morbid fascination for slight and insult and, once insulted, finds happiness only in thoughts of getting even—all this is sheer egotism in its barest and most repulsive form.

Moreover, to be thus vindictive is to make ourselves the slaves of our enemies. Just as school girls easily teased are soon discovered and made the butt of plaguing boys, so all conceivable irritations soon find out the touchy and resentful spirit. When annoyance comes, our greater danger lies, not in the wrong done us, but in the wrong we shall do ourselves if we let ourselves be inwardly exasperated, until our goodwill, serenity and poise are

gone. So we miss the highroad which Luther indicated when he said, "My soul is too glad and too great to be at heart the enemy of any man," or which Booker Washington pointed out when he said, " I . . . resolved that I would permit no man . . . to narrow and degrade my soul by making me hate him."

"Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you"—how impossibly ideal that seems at first! As a matter of fact, it is the most practical and rational rule for daily living that could be laid down. As Mr. Pollock, author of "The Fool," exclaimed, describing the effect of his first real reading of the New Testament just before he wrote his play, "The further I went in the New Testament, the more I said to myself, 'That's the darnedest common sense I ever read!' "

In the course of the Armenian atrocities a young woman and her brother were pursued down the street by a Turkish soldier, cornered in an angle of the wall, and the brother was slain before his sister's eyes. She dodged down an alley, leaped a wall, and escaped. Later, being a nurse, she was forced by the Turkish authorities to work in the military hospital. Into her ward was brought, one day, the same Turkish soldier who had slain her brother. He was very ill. A slight inattention would insure his death. The young woman, now

safe in America, confesses to the bitter struggle that took place in her mind. The old Adam cried, "Vengeance"; the new Christ cried, "Love." And, equally to the man's good and to her own, the better side of her conquered, and she nursed him as carefully as any other patient in the ward. The recognition had been mutual and one day, unable longer to restrain his curiosity, the Turk asked his nurse why she had not let him die, and when she replied, "I am a follower of him who said 'Love your enemies and do them good,'" he was silent for a long time. At last he spoke: "I never knew that there was such a religion. If that is your religion tell me more about it, for I want it."

One is haunted by the idea that if, on any large scale, Christians should exhibit such magnanimity as the Sermon on the Mount enjoins, there would be stirred up in the heart of this very bitter and vindictive world a wistful response like the Turk's.

II

Men commonly fail in magnanimity, not only in relation to their enemies, but to their rivals. Jealousy is the twin brother of vindictiveness. All of us deal with three types of people: folk less prosperous than we are, less able, less influential; equals, whom we easily meet upon a common level; supe-

riors, who overtop and surpass us. These last constitute a critical moral problem. They are more learned than we are, more fortunate, more highly endowed, more charming, more influential; they get what we aspire to but miss; they are promoted more swiftly in the business office, are rated higher in the school, are praised more in the market-place. How many folk there are who can live kindly with inferiors and amiably with equals, but who grow hard and envious as soon as they deal with folk who surpass them!

To be sure, not all superiority in others is thus a temptation to jealousy. We are not jealous of Shakspere. We are not envious of the courage of Livingstone or the character of Phillips Brooks. Persons like them awaken in us aspiration, not envy, and the reason is plain. We are not in active competition with Livingstone or Brooks. But when he who has been running just behind us in the race of life, on the same road with us, strikes up a swifter beat and, after running with us neck and neck awhile, forges ahead and leaves us behind, then we may learn the meaning of the Hebrew proverb:

Wrath is cruel, and anger is overwhelming;
But who is able to stand before jealousy?

Disraeli and Gladstone had long been rivals and when Gladstone successfully attacked his oppo-

nent's policies in Turkey Disraeli turned on him and called him "a sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity." We compete with a rival for promotion and are beaten, and something as old as Cain wakes up in us and gives us a tussle before we are done with it. It is hard to be a good loser. The quality of sportsmanship which can see another man walk off with the prize and still can praise the very excellence by which we are surpassed is none too frequent.

To be sure, Michelangelo, failing at times in generosity to his enemies, was famous for the praise he habitually bestowed on other artists' work, calling Ghiberti's bronze doors of the Baptistery in Florence "the Gates of Paradise." But Michelangelo was so great himself that he could afford such magnanimity. To be sure, Maeterlinck, when he was suggested for membership in the French Academy, the first Belgian in history to be so honored, wrote a letter to *Le Journal* asking that they choose instead "my old friend Emile Verhaeren, first, because he is my elder; second, because he is a very great poet, while I am only an industrious and conscientious prose writer. Any one with patience could write what I have written; nobody could do what he has done. Only a poet is qualified to represent worthily a nation's greatness and heroism." But, beautiful as such magnanimity is,

"in honor preferring one another," Maeterlinck was sufficiently great not to find such generosity too costly. Not to be Michelangelo or Maeterlinck, however, but an unknown man who has done his best and has seen other men walk off with what he wanted, who has planned and missed, aspired and failed, and still to be magnanimous, still to walk through life with sunlit and unenvious heart, being his own best self and happy in being that—there is a man who has won a victory.

The lack of this magnanimous spirit is the cause of many rancorous ills. Envy ruins families; the story of Cinderella and her jealous sisters has never needed a commentary to explain it since the day when it was written. The crazy extravagance which is the curse of our social life is a child of envy. We set a sensible standard for our households, but some one else outpaces our less fevered steps and we whip up our speed to beat him if we can. We do not want to be outdone but must live in houses quite as large, wear clothes as fine, travel in automobiles as luxurious, and spend as freely as others do. Jealousy embitters all the class divisions that cut our American society asunder. It would be hard enough to solve the problem of poverty and wealth, of employee and employer, if it were purely economic. But it is everywhere complicated and embarrassed by jealousy. Thomas B. Reed once

said: "Whenever I walk through the streets of that democratic importing city of New York and look at the brown-stone fronts, my gorge alway rises. . . . When I feel that way I know what the feeling is. It is good, honest, high-minded envy. When some other gentlemen have the same feeling they think it's political economy."

What jealously between nations does, each envying the power and wealth of others, is written in lines of blood and fire across the world. And even when one comes into sacred places where folk in organized philanthropy, social service or the church are supposedly working unselfishly for the good of men, jealousy is as present as it was on that last night when the Master with his disciples ate the memorials of his sacrifice and "there arose also a contention among them, which of them was accounted to be greatest."

Yet what fools we are to let this vice steal from us, as it always does, our independence, our happiness, and our usefulness! We make ourselves the slaves of all whom we envy. Their superiority does not harm us, but our jealousy does. It is a great day in a man's life when he signs his own Declaration of Independence that instead of eying others with jealous regard, trying to copy them, to climb where they sit perched, or to outstrip them utterly, he will be himself, live his own proper life in his

own place, with his own gifts and aptitudes, and will not spoil the service he can render by worrying over the superiority of other folk.

The full solution of the problem of jealousy, however, carries us much deeper than mere independence of spirit. Goethe was right: "Against the great superiority of another there is no remedy but love." Positively to love the excellence by which we are surpassed, as though superiority of genius and character were indeed a "public banquet to which we are all invited,"—that alone takes from the mind the last vestige of rancor. To care about the welfare of mankind supremely, to rejoice in better work than ours which helps the cause along, to be interested in the thing that needs to be done and to be careless who gets the credit for doing it, to be glad of any chance to help, and glad, too, of any greater chance than another may possess, such magnanimity is both good sense and good Christianity. For jealousy goes wherever Jesus' idea of life comes in: "If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all."

III

The Central Presbyterian Church in Seoul, Korea, used to be commonly known as the "Butchers'

Church," and the nickname still occasionally is heard. Now, butchers were one of the most despised castes in Korea. No butcher could wear his hair knotted under his hat, and that is the mark of social respectability. One could kick a butcher and he would not dare resent it. Then a Christian missionary came and across the lines of caste and race extended his good-will, so that, when the first church was founded in Seoul, butchers were on the Board of Elders. Thus the people came to nickname it the "Butchers' Church." It was a mark of contumely then; it is a mark of glory now. For one more exhibit has been given there of that kind of magnanimity which disregards all lines of nation, race, caste, color, and privilege, and treats all men as individuals upon the basis of their human worth.

The great sins against magnanimity are three and they are a bad family: vindictiveness, jealousy, and prejudice. You do not have to look far in most minds to find any one of them, but perhaps the most universal is prejudice. This man hates the Jews; that man has a deep dislike of Catholics; and this other cannot stand a Protestant. One man is sure that all Japanese are liars; another thinks that every German or every Frenchman, as the case may be, has a devil; and, as for social lines, "our kind" are the elect people and all the rest are more or less barbarian.

We lump masses of human beings in one indiscriminate confusion, make a sweeping classification, tag the group with name or nickname, and think that we have said something. As a matter of fact, we have displayed intelligence almost as elevated as a moron's, and as for spirit we have revealed ourselves the true successors of all the prejudiced provincials whose trail through history is marked with bigotry and blood.

In a prominent New York church where the crowds were pressing down the aisles, the usher showed a Chinese couple into a pew just as two Americans had reached the spot. "Pshaw!" exclaimed the woman, "why did you let those heathen go in first?" One shrinks from the proper description of that attitude. It is of course discourtesy, provincialism; but it is more. It is one of the most contemptible and ruinous sins which today are destroying human life and making dangerously difficult the solution of our social and international problems—a bigoted and ignorant prejudice that lumps and damns whole classes and races at a swoop. It does literally what the slang phrase suggests: it thinks in bunches.

I talked recently with an employer. He was as hard as nails. Whenever he thought of the men who work with their hands he thought of a labor union, and he hated that. The toiling millions of America

were lumped into one group and tagged with a despised name. He had not thought of them as individuals—young men and women who fall in love and want homes, folks who have babies and cherish for them the same ambitions which he feels for his, human beings who find this earth a perplexed and tangled place in which to live, and who want more leisure, more comfort, and more liberty. So, because he had not thought of them as individuals, he never had put himself in their places or understood how surely in their places he would act like them. And the shoe fits just as well upon the other foot. There are laboring men who, thinking of employers, lump them in one mass, marked "Capitalists," and represented in their imagination by such figures as Mr. Hearst uses in his cartoons. We may suggest what overhead industrial and international solutions we can devise, but we will not get far until we humanize our thought of folks. They are not primarily Chinese, Japanese, Americans, Capitalists, Trades Unionists, Jews, Gentiles, black, brown, white, or yellow. They are primarily individual human beings a good deal like ourselves and in many cases a good deal better.

In this day of so-called "social" thinking, let us insist that this attitude toward individuals is alike a test of character and a necessary basis of social progress. No joining of organizations, contribu-

ting to budgets, being on committees, constructing institutions that propose to turn out progress by quantity-production, standardized like Ford cars, no long-range endeavors to reform social situations in general, can take the place of this inner test of a man's real social attitude—his magnanimity toward all sorts of individuals.

Sometime ago I heard a group of children sitting on the street curb and singing a missionary hymn:

The little black baby that rolls in the sand,
In a country far over the sea,
Is my African brother, and Jesus loves him
Just as he loves you and me.

At first I was amused to hear them singing there. Then I fell to meditating on how easy was the problem presented to them so long as the little black baby was rolling in the sand in a country far over the sea. They did not have to deal with him individually. If they helped him at all they did it in general and at long range through a great organization. But what a difference when our "African brother" no longer rolls in the sand in a country far over the sea, but moves into our neighborhood, does business on our street, becomes a servant in our home, and sends his children to our school. Then we have to deal with him individually. Then we have to be just to him if we can, put ourselves

in his place, see how matters would appear to us if we had been born with a black skin, and act accordingly. That is the acid test. Not the organizations we belong to, not the creeds we recite, not the budgets we raise, so much reveal us as the way we treat individuals. And that conclusion sounds strangely like something which Jesus said: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

IV

This, then, is the gist of the whole matter: friendliness is the fundamental need of the world. Most people recognize this fact in so far as it concerns those inner relationships where we are bound by warm affection to congenial folk. No man is the whole of himself; his friends are the rest of him.

But too many fail to see that these inner friendships are meant to be like hothouses, where the warm affections, kindly attitudes and confident faiths in human worth may get their start, which afterward are to be transplanted to the wider, ruder, colder, more forbidding world.

What is needed is an expansive friendliness that takes in all sorts and conditions of people. The bigger our cities grow, the more complicated and

mechanical our civilization becomes, the more we need it.

I thought the house across the way
Was empty; but since yesterday
Crape on the door makes me aware
That some one has been living there.

So friendless and cold is much of our modern life in great cities.

Our very churches become like hotels rather than homes. A man sits in the lobby of a metropolitan hostelry as lonely as Crusoe on his island. He is not asking for a bigger building, or more garish decorations, or better food, or more convenient service—but he does wish that he were back in his home town with his friends. So on Sunday morning, in a great city church, folk are to be found who, amid the glorious architecture, stirring music and highly paid preaching of a metropolitan cathedral, are lonely—lonely, it may be, for a wooden meeting house on a country hillside, lighted by oil lamps, with an organ that squeaks every time the boy pumps it, and a man in the pulpit who cannot preach for sour apples, but where they have friends.

The fundamental need of the world is friendship.

But friendship is never adequately understood if it is made merely a matter of congenial intimacies.

Friendship is an expansive spirit that overthrows vindictiveness and takes in enemies, overpasses jealousy and embraces rivals. Too great and too glad to be stopped by prejudice, it seeks the good of all sorts and conditions of folk across all the barriers that caste, class, and race can erect. Such magnanimous friendship is an elemental test of character. Such undiscourageable good-will is the indispensable foundation for the brotherhood of man.

Possessing a Past Tense

I

THE month in which Thanksgiving Day falls reminds us that a serious test of character is involved in any man's attitude toward his heritage. For Thanksgiving Day takes our thought away from the immediate foregrounds of our experience and recalls to memory our historic background. In this respect human life is like a landscape where on the level plain our tasks absorb our usual attention but where, above us and behind us like mountains, not always thought of but always there, stand our racial traditions, the nations that begat us, the families that have nourished us, the heritage that has enriched us. This simile of foreground and background makes one fact evident: we can more or less choose our manner of living in the foreground of our experience, but the background we cannot choose. That was given to us. That is our inheritance. We can choose only our attitude toward it.

We can be grateful for it, live up to it, rejoice in it, and be worthy of it, or we can forget it, be irreverent concerning it, and unappreciative of it.

Fullness of life is in part a matter of the number of tenses which a man possesses. We begin in infancy with the present tense alone—the clamorous needs, absorbing hurts, or satisfying pleasures of the immediate moment. As youth comes on we acquire a future tense. We begin to live, as Wordsworth sings, with

> *. . . hope that can never die,*
> *Effort, and expectation, and desire,*
> *And something evermore about to be.*

Then, as a man grows older, he tends to acquire a past tense also. If he has lived worthily memory becomes a shrine with treasures in it too sacred to be given up, and far beyond the borders of his individual recollection he values the history of his race and the sacrifices which have purchased his liberties. One feels intuitively that a man's spiritual quality in part is tested by this possession of a past tense.

To be sure, we need to guard ourselves against a false glorification of the past. A great deal of nonsense has been talked about the "good old times." It is said that one of the oldest documents of the race is a cuneiform fragment from one of the lowest strata of the ruins of Babylon, beginning with these

words: "Alas! Alas! Times are not what they were!" The plain fact is that there never have been any "good old times."

Folk, for example, who wistfully long for the ancient days of religion's ascendency and who bemoan the degeneracy of these present times would do well to consider this. What good old times are they wishing to have back again? Times when Luther said, "I am sick of life if this life can be called life. . . . Implacable hatred and strife amongst the great . . . no hopes of any improvement . . . the age is Satan's own; gladly would I see myself and all my people quickly snatched from it"? Times when John Calvin said, "The future appals me. I dare not think of it. Unless the Lord descends from heaven, barbarism will engulf us"? Times when Henry VIII's secretary wrote in grim jest to his friend Erasmus that the scarcity and dearness of wood in England were due to the quantities wasted in burning heretics, or when later the Puritan Cartwright, defending by Biblical texts the barbarities of religious persecution, exclaimed, "If this be regarded as extreme and bloodie I am glad to be so with the Holy Ghost"? Times when Governor Berkeley of Virginia in 1670 said, "I thank God there are no free schools, nor printing, and I hope we shall not have them these hundred years; for learning has brought

disobedience and heresy and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them and libels against the best government. God keep us from both"?

What "good old times?"

Controversy is bad enough among modern churchmen, but even that is better than it used to be. A century and a half ago some one wrote a pamphlet entitled, "An Old Fox Tarred and Feathered." Who was the "Old Fox" against whom this author entertained such bitterness? John Wesley, who for Christ's sake and the Gospel's probably traveled more miles, did more work, preached more sermons, won more converts, and was responsible for more practical philanthropy than any other man since Paul—he was the "Old Fox" who was to be tarred and feathered. And if one asks who wanted to tar and feather him, the answer is Toplady. Not Toplady who wrote,

> *Rock of Ages, cleft for me,*
> *Let me hide myself in thee?*

The same man! He wanted John Wesley tarred and feathered. Good old times, indeed!

Nor have there been any good old times in the nation—none, at least, that we should have recognized as such had we lived contemporaneously with them. We remember with gratitude the voyage of the *Mayflower* as a glorious adventure of

faith and enterprise, and so it was. When on the last day of May, 1919, Lieutenant A. C. Read, the first man to cross the Atlantic in the air, brought his seaplane safely down in the harbor of Plymouth, England, he was officially welcomed by the mayor of that ancient town and an applauding multitude. The whole world was agog at the achievement and enthusiastic over it. But when the *Mayflower* sailed from that same spot three centuries before, there was no applause; few knew and fewer cared; the adventure was an obscure and apparently insignificant affair. Had we been there nothing could have persuaded us that we were living in any "good old times."

Here is part of a letter written by Robert Cushman on board the *Mayflower* before she finally left England:

"If ever we make a Plantation God works a miracle! Specially considering how scant we shall be of victuals, and, most of all, ununited amongst ourselves. . . .

"If I should write to you of all things which promiscuously forerun our ruin, I should overcharge my weak head and grieve your tender heart: only this I pray you, Prepare for evil tidings of us, every day! But pray for us instantly! . . . I see not, in reason, how we shall escape . . . but God can do much, and his will be done!"

Possessing a past tense does not mean a false idealization of days gone by. It does not involve

subjection to the tyranny of the dead hand. One need not deny the fact of progress nor blind his eyes to the miseries and sins of our fathers. But, for all that, condescension to the past or smashing attacks on its failures cannot exhaust a wise man's attitude. Thanksgiving Day does represent an essential element in a good man's life.

II

The plain fact is that the biggest part of our lives is our heritage. One must differentiate here between blood heredity and social inheritance. The first is a matter of the physical and mental traits which we carry over biologically from our forebears; the second is a matter of the social environments, the literary, artistic, religious traditions, the racial and national culture, into which we are born and by which our plastic lives are shaped and molded. Even yet we do not know so much about biological heredity as some glib amateurs who write upon the subject seem to think, but this we do know: If we had been born of the most select eugenic blood that could be imagined and had been dropped as infants into an African jungle tribe, we should have grown up molded and conformed by the social heritage of that tribe's traditions. We should have believed in its witchcraft, feared its

devils, trusted its medicine men and respected its taboos. No blood heredity could have been strong enough to withstand the all but irresistible pressure of the social inheritance.

So strong is the social heritage that, when by some powerful force it is given a new direction, it can transform whole nations. Japan today is being made over with amazing rapidity, not by any change in biological heredity, but by the acceptance of many influential elements in the social heritage of the West.

On Thanksgiving morning, 1868, Henry Ward Beecher, in the course of his sermon in Plymouth pulpit, said: "My old fatherland is Germany, the home of our Anglo-Saxon blood. The old honest stock, the old sincere stock, the old domestic stock, it is. It is the Saxon stock that always ran toward republicanism. The monarchical stock—the French stock, the Italian stock, the Spanish stock—all ran toward Monarchism. . . . But the Saxon stock always ran for the common people and the commonwealth." How great a difference one finds when he turns suddenly from 1868 to 1914! Nothing had happened to the blood heredity of the German people, but something had happened to their social inheritance. That had been radically altered by influences whose figurehead in our imagination is Bismarck, until children were being

born in 1914 into a social tradition far different from that of the peace-loving, domestic, artistic and democratic Saxon folk of 1868.

The thesis is not difficult to establish. Among the most influential factors in our lives is surely our social heritage.

Many modern folk have a quite unjustified sense of intellectual superiority over their ancestors because so many evils which our forebears took for granted we would not endure, and so many social improvements which seemed to them impossible we take for granted. But the difference between us and our ancestors does not lie primarily in individual increase of mental power on our part. There is no evidence that any man's intellect on earth today is equal to Aristotle's, nor do we know with any surety that the brain capacity of mankind as a whole is greater now than it was in the Ice Age. What has happened is mainly the slow accumulation of a social heritage. By long and patient processes of aspiring, thinking, trying, daring, and sacrificing, mankind has accumulated a cultural inheritance. That democracy can be made to work, that by the scientific method we can gain mastery over the latent resources of the universe, that trial by jury is practicable, that torture is a foolish method of seeking evidence in the courts, that chattel slavery is a failure—such things we take for granted,

not because we individually are wiser than our forebears, who disbelieved them all, but because we share in a social tradition which we did not even help to create, but which has shaped and conformed our thinking with irresistible power.

As one ponders this overwhelming influence of our social heritage, Thanksgiving Day gathers fresh significance. If we do possess in our racial and national inheritance institutions and ideas of priceless value, purchased by the sacrifice of past generations, we would better appreciate them and take care of them. And if in our social heritage there are perilous traditions and tendencies, we would better expunge them.

Suppose, for example, that in our generation we should outlaw war, should build substitutes in international coöperation to serve the purposes which war has tried to serve and lamentably has failed in. Suppose that the whole war system should collapse and machine guns go into the museums with the wracks and thumbscrews. Then our children would find war unthinkable, not because they individually were wiser and better than we, but because we had created a new social tradition which would shape the international attitudes of everybody born into it.

III

The initial response of a fine-natured man when he thinks of the best elements in his civilization and of the sacrifices which they have cost is gratitude. That, in itself, is an ennobling sentiment and in personal relationships is indispensable. No ingrate is fit to live.

The grace of gratitude, however, ought to extend itself to the whole social background of our lives, for the obvious reason that we all have two kinds of possessions: some we worked for, won for ourselves by our own creative skill; others were given us to start with. Now, these two kinds of possessions—the things we achieve and the things we inherit—demand of us two different attitudes. The first kind requires strenuousness; the second requires appreciation. We win the first by work; we win the second by thankful receptivity. So an author will have upon his shelves two sorts of books. Some he wrote himself. They are the output of his strenuous mental toil. The others are what Milton called "the precious life-blood of a master spirit"; they were written, not by the man, but for him; they are a part of his heritage and through appreciation they are his.

As between these two types of possessions we Americans notoriously have been obsessed by the

first. We think chiefly of things to be achieved. In consequence we are very energetic, ambitious, pushing. But we are not inwardly rich. Strenuously absorbed in things to be done by us, we too often forget to appreciate some glorious things that already have been done for us. If some one is tempted to say that strenuousness is hard and appreciation easy, he displays his ignorance.

A deep and reverent understanding of and gratitude for the best heritage of the race is one of the fairest and rarest fruits of a mature soul.

One who lacks this expanded sense of indebtedness to the past is like a town I once visited. "Thirteen years ago," said my friend as he waved his hand out toward it, "there was nothing here—and now look at it!" I did look at it. It was very raw. It was painfully extempore. It had all the virtues of enterprising youth—briskness, energy, expectancy—but it had the obvious lacks of youth as well. It had no past tense. As I looked at it I thought of other towns which also have a present and a future, but which have a past as well. One is aware in them of days gone by and, it may be, of high doings when folk thought and died for great causes. The past is not everything, and any generation or any man that tries to make it everything is lost. But neither are the present and the future

everything. It is an ennobling experience to have a great past and to be gratefully aware of it.

How often one wishes that he could get hold of those easy-going batteners on public privileges, who saunter into life as though it all belonged to them in fee simple to possess, with no sense of indebtedness to the social heritage and with no consciousness of what it cost! How much one wishes that he could back them into a corner from which they could not escape and talk to them like this:

You are taking for granted what you have no business to take for granted. You act as though it were a negligible matter that for innumerable generations forward-looking men, paying a price in sacrifice which no imagination can compute, have been building up the decencies, securities, and opportunities of civilized life. The greatest day in any man's life, as another put it, is when he turns the corner of a street and runs into a new idea. That is the greatest day in any civilization's life, as well, and in our Western world it has happened three times.

Once our civilization turned the corner of a street and ran into Jesus of Nazareth. It never has been the same world since. Something happened at that meeting from which humanity never will be able to escape and never ought to wish to escape.

Again, our civilization turned the corner of a

street and ran into the idea that if we patiently study the laws of nature we can gain such control over nature's law-abiding forces as will enable us to transform the world. That, too, was a momentous day. This never has been the same earth since and it never will be.

Again, our civilization turned the corner of a street and ran into the idea that all of the people can be trusted in coöperative responsibility to bear a hand together in framing laws which then all the people together will obey. It was a prodigious idea. The arguments against it are clear, the perils of it obvious. It was an adventure in comparison with which Magellan's exploit was simple.

The principles of Jesus, the power of applied science, the idea of democracy—from these three things the most hopeful elements of our civilization flow. These things are the heart of the heritage which we hold in trust from our fathers before us for our children after us. God pity the man who ever grows so sophisticated that the thrill drops out from any one of them!

IV

Indeed, at this special juncture of the world's history, few things need more to be driven home on the public conscience than this simple but ominous

fact: it is a good deal easier to waste a patrimony than it is to make one. One of the elemental mysteries of life is that destruction is easier than construction. It took a long time and hard toil to build the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, one of the seven wonders of the world, but a mad youth who wanted his name remembered threw a single torch, and in one night the temple was destroyed. It is easy to waste what it is hard to build.

This truth ought to come home to our generation with special emphasis because these have been prodigal years through which we have been living. Ever since 1914 the world as a whole has been spending its patrimony. One does not mean money alone, although a war that cost $186,000,000,000 is bad enough. One does not mean human life alone, although 10,000,000 dead on the battlefield is an expenditure not easy to exaggerate. One does not mean creative art alone, although one who has seen a ruined Gothic cathedral will readily agree that it is easier to waste than to build. One does not mean domestic life and happiness alone, although one who has walked through a ruined city like Bapaume, a skeleton in stone of what was once a living town, will not easily forget its horror. Rather, all these separate items of wastage are but symptomatic of that spendthrift prodigality which has been throwing away and still is throwing away

great opportunities on which the weal of mankind depends.

One who loves ancient Greece turns back in days like these to the fifth century B. C. Man was there presented with one of the supreme chances that history records. The Persians had been driven back into Asia; Europe was safe and Greece was the hope of it. Democracy was understood in Greece as it was not going to be understood again for centuries. Science was growing in Greece as it would not grow again until the Middle Ages had come and gone. Socrates and Plato were teaching truths about God and immortality that would not be so well taught again for five hundred years. Then with this patrimony in their hands, the Greeks wasted it. Athens and Sparta, who should have stood together for the furtherance of their heritage, fought through long years of bloody warfare for the selfish leadership of Greece. That struggle was a fatal blow to Greek civilization. They threw away their heritage.

In spite of the startling resemblance between that old situation and ours, we still may hope that the chance for Western civilization is not yet gone. Only, we cannot be prodigals and waste it any more. We must have men and women who understand the priceless values handed down to us. We must learn to fear and hate our spendthrift ways. As long as this generation lasts, an urgent need will

press upon us for constructive spirits in home, church, nation, world. We cannot stand wasters. A little more careless, thankless prodigality and our patrimony will be finished.

V

To this end we in America may well refresh at Thanksgiving time our conviction that we have a great heritage worth keeping and improving, and may well resist the too fashionable impression that our chief business with the past is to escape from it. The idea of progress has created that impression. We take it for granted that since the world is progressing we, of course, are better than our sires. We should not be too sure of that. It is none too clear, in spite of M. Coué, that "every day in every way we are getting better and better."

To be sure, we use electric lights where our fathers used tallow dips, and ride in express trains where they had to go in ox-carts. To be sure, we can say "Hello!" over a wire to a man a thousand miles away, and our houses are filled with comforts and conveniences of which a medieval king never dreamed. And when we undergirdle such material advances with a doctrine of evolution popularly misinterpreted to mean that we are all upon a funicular railroad going up, no matter what we do, we gain

a happy-go-lucky philosophy of life. But it is worth considering that it always is possible to improve the instruments of life and still to leave life itself static and unredeemed.

The plain fact is that man's life and progress do not consist in the abundance of the *things* that he possesses.

Is the spirit of our homelife in America better than our fathers'? The old New England family has been made to seem hopelessly dour, somber and lugubrious, but one has doubts about the picture when he runs upon a letter like this, written by John Winthrop to his wife in 1637, after they had been married twenty years:

"Sweetheart,—

I was unwillingly hindered from coming to thee, nor am I likely to see thee before the last day of this week: therefore I shall want a band or two: and cuffs. I pray thee also send me six or seven leaves of tobacco dried and powdered. Have care of thyself this cold weather, and speak to the folks to keep the goats well out of the garden. . . . If any letters be come for me, send them by this bearer. I will trouble thee no further. The Lord bless and keep thee, my sweet wife, and all our family; and send us a comfortable meeting. So I kiss thee and love thee ever and rest

Thy faithful husband,

JOHN WINTHROP."

All I have to remark is that if this is being a somber Puritan, I wish that we had more homes in America similarly Puritanical after twenty years.

Is our inward spiritual life better than our fathers'? It is easy to caricature the religion of our sires. To win a chance to laugh at it one need only suppose it identical with the intellectual formulations and practical expressions which were characteristic of their time. But, surely, the moral pith of our fathers' faith was no laughing matter. They were God-fearing men in this deep sense: they feared God so much that they did not fear anybody else at all. An aged minister gave me the blessing of the older generation on the day I was ordained for the ministry. He stood at the end of a long life and I at the beginning of mine. This was his benediction: "Young man, never you fear the face of mortal clay!" That was the spirit of the fathers at their best and it is a great heritage.

There is a kind of patriotism which the sooner we end the better. It is narrow, bigoted, sectarian, provincial; it lives on prejudice and it makes for war. But there is a patriotism that need never end, though internationalism grow and bloom and bear its long-prayed-for fruit. To be devoted to the best spiritual traditions of your own land, to be glad about them, to be proud of them, to rejoice in them, to want to live up to them, and be worthy of

them, and because of them to hope and work that the Republic may play an honorable part in the world's life,—that is great patriotism. May it never end!

The Power to See It Through

I

INTERESTING statistics have been compiled by insurance actuaries with reference to the prospects of a hundred average young men twenty-five years of age starting out in business. The results are decidedly disconcerting. Forty years afterward, when those young men are sixty-five years old, they will on the average have fallen into the following classes: thirty-six dead, fifty-four financially dependent on family or charity, five barely able to make their own living, four well-to-do, one rich. If we discount the unfairness and ill fortune of external circumstance which doubtless are involved in this lame finish of many good beginnings, we still have left a large amount of inability to see life through which must be due to lack of character. A very serious test of human fiber is involved in the fact that there are so many good beginnings and poor endings.

The qualities which lead a man to launch out on an enterprise with promising enthusiasm may be accompanied by a lack of those qualities which will see him through to a successful finish. Good starters and good stayers are not necessarily the same people. Ardor, excitement, susceptibility to sudden feeling, the flare of good intentions—such forces set men going, but they do not enable men to carry on when the going is hard. That requires another kind of moral energy which evidently is not so common as the first. Plenty of people are equipped with efficient self-starters. They get away easily. They are off with a fleet eagerness that wakens high expectations, but they peter out; they soon stick in the sand or stall on a high hill.

Nevertheless, even in our individual enterprises, much more in our whole life's meaning, the ultimate test is our ability to finish. In one of our Federal prisons today is a man who for fifty years with unblemished reputation lived a life of probity and honor in his own community. Then, as a government servant, he went to France during the war and mishandled funds. Only that will be remembered about him. The half century of fine living is blotted out. He was not able to finish.

Even when the problem presents itself in less dramatic terms, it still is there. All biography is a commentary on the necessity of seeing life through.

Oliver Wendell Holmes in the nineteenth century maintained an extraordinary relationship with Samuel Johnson in the eighteenth century. Holmes was born in the late summer of 1809; Johnson was born in the early autumn of 1709 and had written about him the most exhaustive biography ever penned. "Thus there was established," wrote Holmes in his old age, "a close bond of relationship between the great English scholar and writer and myself. Year by year, and almost month by month, my life has kept pace in this century with his life in the last century. I had only to open my Boswell at any time, and I knew just what Johnson at my age, twenty or fifty or seventy, was thinking and doing; what were his feelings about life; what changes the years had wrought in his body, his mind, his feelings, his companionships, his reputation. It was for me a kind of unison between two instruments, both playing that old familiar air, 'Life,'—one a bassoon, if you will, and the other an oaten pipe, if you care to find an image for it, but still keeping pace with each other, until the players both grew old and grey."

Then, one day, Holmes wrote, "A hundred years ago this day, December 13, 1784, died the admirable and ever to be remembered Dr. Samuel Johnson. . . . I feel lonely now that my great companion and friend of so many years has left me."

Whenever through the pages of a favorite biography one so lives vicariously in another's experiences, he runs inevitably upon this elemental fact about life—it has to be lived to its finish. Living is a good deal like splitting a rock—the workman lifts his iron maul and brings it down repeatedly upon the seam until the deed is done. If, now, one ask which blow split the rock, it is clear that they all did. Yet without the last one the first and all between would have come to nothing. Many lives fail from inability to deliver the last blow.

II

This is evident to any one who watches the moral collapses of maturity. We continually stress the temptation, perils and failures of youth. Ours has been called "the children's century," and some of the characteristic attitudes of our generation make the name appropriate. One of our writers is even reported to have said that it makes little difference what happens to a boy after he is twelve years old. We are keenly sensitive to the problems of childhood; we have thoroughly learned the proverb that just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined; we feel confident that if we can give a boy a good beginning we can insure him against a bad ending.

Important as is the truth involved in this emphasis, it is only a half-truth. Some men are like rivers

which flow out through dangerous rapids in their early course into calm currents of maturity. But other men are like Niagara River—beginning with a full, deep, powerful stream and breaking in its latter course into such tumultuous rapids and waterfalls as no river at its beginning can ever know. "Call no man happy till he is dead" is a cynical proverb, but it springs from an important insight into human experience. The collapses of maturity are quite as perilous as the callowness of youth.

For one thing, maturity often has to handle the problem of success. When we were young we had our way to make and we went to the task with all the resources of courage and determination which we could muster. We knew that it would not be an easy fight and we were resolved that, if we lost, defeat would not be due to any lack of hard, clean hitting on our part. The very struggle to succeed is often a strong protector of ambitious youth. But when in our maturity we have in some measure succeeded, have won recognition, standing, influence, it may be wealth, then comes one of the most crucial moral conflicts which a man can face. It is one thing to succeed; it is another to be fit to succeed.

Many a man has made a clean hit in youth, has gotten to first base, has run to second, has reached

third; he is very well content with himself—he is succeeding finely—and then he is caught napping off third when there is no need of it, when all his friends are counting on him to get home.

It is a common fallacy to suppose that men are tempted where they are weak. Upon the contrary, it is about men's powers that temptations grow turbulent like swirling waters around a rock. The possession of promising talent opens the way for its misuse. A young student of law to whom Blackstone is still a stranger is not tempted to sell his soul pleading an evil case. But when he has achieved mastery of the law, with the prestige and power that go with it, he surely will be tempted to misuse his acumen and resourcefulness.

Temptations deal with life as winds do with trees; the taller the tree the more the tempests wrestle with it. One wonders, therefore, if statistics were available, whether more failures would be registered in youth or in maturity. Many men, for example, cannot stand financial success. Getting money may develop their characters; having it ruins them. An old legend says that Moses used to play the shepherd's pipe as he tended his flocks upon the plains of Midian and that when he went up to die on Nebo's top he gave his old flute to the priests, who used, on high occasions, to play it before the Lord. In time, however, it seemed un-

worthy that this simple shepherd's pipe should have touched the great Moses' lips; so they covered it with gold. But the gilded instrument would play no more; it shone externally but it was mute.

Even intellectual success can prove ruinous. Some years ago a man wandered up and down the Bowery in New York selling shoestrings for the drinks. According to our typical modern emphasis we should imagine behind him some evil home where he was damned into the world. Upon the contrary, he came from a fine home, had every opportunity, graduated with a Phi Beta Kappa key from one of our oldest and greatest universities, and flowered out with every promise into his professional career. He collapsed after a splendid start. His biography could be summed up in the words of Jesus' parable: "This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

III

The collapses of maturity are due, not alone to the increase of power, but also to the impact of trouble. Out of a sheltered and fortunate youth many a man goes into a maturity where disappointment piles on disappointment, and trouble, like a battering ram, hits again and again the same spot in his walls, until the foundations shake. Maturity has to deal with facts much more tragic than youth

knows. Youth thinks of William Penn serene in his success, as the statue on the State house in Philadelphia pictures him, but maturity knows that William Penn lived anything but a serene life. His wife died; his son became a leader among the profligates of the city; he was publicly accused of treason to the Government and was imprisoned more than once; his estates in England were ruined by unjust taxation; he was compelled to cede away all his holdings in America; and at last an apoplectic stroke ruined his mind. There is small wonder that starting power and staying power are two things and that many lives highly gifted with the first fail for lack of the second.

Here is the life story of a humble woman:

"I was living at Sandy Hook when I met Jacob Walker. He kept the Sandy Hook lighthouse. He took me to that lighthouse as his bride. I enjoyed that, for it was on land, and I could keep a garden and raise vegetables and flowers.

"After a few years my husband was transferred to Robbins Reef. The day we came here I said: 'I won't stay. The sight of water whichever way I look makes me lonesome and blue.' I refused to unpack my trunks and boxes at first. I unpacked them a little at a time. After a while they were all unpacked and I stayed on. . . .

"My husband caught a heavy cold while tending the light. It turned into pneumonia. It was necessary to take him to the Smith Infirmary on Staten Island, where

he could have better care than I could give him in the lighthouse.

"I could not leave the light to be with him. He understood. One night, while I sat up there tending the light, I saw a boat coming. Something told me what news it was bringing me. I expected the words that came up to me from the darkness.

" 'We are sorry, Mrs. Walker, but your husband's worse.'

" 'He is dead,' I said.

"We buried him in the cemetery on the hill. Every morning when the sun comes up I stand at the port-hole and look in the direction of his grave. . . . Sometimes the hills are white with snow. Sometimes they are green. Sometimes brown. But there always seems to come a message from that grave. It is what I heard Jacob say more often than anything else in his life. Just three words: 'Mind the light.' "

Mrs. Walker, still keeping the light, was seventy years old when the reporter interviewed her, and her husband had been dead thirty-two years.

Something more than an eager getaway is needed for such living. Such living requires what the New Testament calls "patient continuance." Nobody ever escapes the necessity for that. Without it bitterness, hardness, cynicism, hopelessness befall men's lives. For when the struggles of youthful adolescence are all over there is spiritual adolescence of maturity. We all have to deal with it if we are to see life through. It is the soul enlar-

ging its grasp to include trouble in its scheme of life; it is the spirit, like a ship, moving out from the waters of youth's inner bay and steadying down to the long pull of the open sea.

IV

The shame of a good beginning spoiled by a bad ending is emphasized when we recall the many lives that have reversed the process. Consider two pictures. The first is a provision store in New Orleans in the year 1857. A lad fifteen years old is seeking employment there. He has been brought up in an English workhouse, has run away, has crossed the sea to make his fortune. His fortune begins in that provision store where he is hired because he is able in a legible hand to mark the coffee sacks. The second picture is Westminster Abbey crowded with a distinguished assembly from the ends of the earth. A funeral cortege moves down the nave. It pauses when the bier is opposite the tomb of David Livingstone. One almost thinks that the dead Livingstone himself may hear the singing of his favorite hymn,

O spread Thy covering wings around
Till all our wanderings cease.

They are honoring Henry M. Stanley with a funeral service in the Abbey. Those two scenes, so far apart, belong to a single life. His name was not

Stanley. It was Rowlands or Rollants, no one knows which. Stanley was the man in New Orleans whose name the boy took for his own. Unpromising beginning to be crowned by such an ending!

Such stories are the romance of human life. Many a man is like a well-pitched ball which has started with such apparent lack of promise that the spectators already have prepared themselves to cry "Wild ball," when suddenly it straightens itself out and crosses the center of the plate.

In the realm of character this power of recovery is one of the central messages of religion. A book like Harold Begbie's "Twice-Born Men" is an inspiriting record of folk whose lamentable start was redeemed by a great conclusion. Fornicators, adulterers, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revelers, extortioners—such is the New Testament's description of the raw material out of which many of the first Christians were made. And from that day to this, making Augustine Bishop of Hippo out of Augustine the slave of lust, or Jerry McAuley the man out of Jerry McAuley the drunkard, has been one of the Gospel's specialties.

To a man who has had a fine start and now faces the possibility of a miserable ending, there is a stimulating challenge in these folk who reverse the process, who started by being pitchblende and ended by being radium.

V

The power to see life through to a great conclusion is obviously a matter of patience, and patience is of all virtues one of the most difficult to achieve. Nothing in this world, however, is likely to get on without it, for the world itself is built on patient lines. A magician will thrill his audience by planting in a pot of earth a seed which, under the waving of his wand, will produce in a moment a fruit-laden tree. But God never makes trees like that. From the solar nebulæ to the oak that shades our lawn is a long story, so long that our imaginations weary in trying to measure it.

Man, however, likes the magician's way better; he is naturally impatient; as a popular song puts it, he wants what he wants when he wants it; and in consequence he fails to carry on to a fine finish.

A traveler tells us that sunrise in the Tyrolese Alps takes four hours of gradually expanding glory before the sun is fully up, but the traveler also says that a cinema concern has taken a moving picture of the sunrise which is now run off in ninety seconds for the delectation of the crowds. We like things done that way; we wish to condense and hasten the whole process of the universe; we would cry, "Step lively," to the Eternal.

By this attitude we often unfit ourselves to live.

Just now, for example, many folk are so impatient over the failure of the ideal hopes which we associated with the fighting and winning of the war that on every side they are collapsing into cynicism. They were sure that the millennium would be none too good to expect as the gain of such terrific sacrifice. All sorts of human unities and brotherhoods were to come in the wake of victory; everybody was to get together with everybody else; we were to have pan-Christianity, pan-Americanism, pan-nationalism—and what we have is pandemonium.

As a matter of fact we had no right to expect that war could cook and serve us such delicious dishes. War always has done exactly the opposite. Dr. Washington Gladden, in his "Recollections," speaking of the days which followed the Civil War, said,

"No nation can engage in a protracted war without suffering a serious loss of national probity and honor. The worst losses are outside of the army and after the war . . . the total effect of war upon the nation is disastrous; inevitably it lowers the moral tone; it scatters the seeds of moral pestilence; it results in just such disorders and corruptions as those which disfigure the pages of our national history in the decade following the close of the Civil War."

It is not only bad ethics, therefore; it is stupid to fall into cynicism because the Great War did not save the world. The Great War almost ruined the

world, and there is no way out except as men get their second wind and tackle the problem of war itself and, behind that, the evils which cause war. The only folk who are fit to live and work in this world are folk who have that kind of undiscourageable patience.

When one hears Parsifal he sees Klingsor's palace, the citadel of evil, collapse in a twinkling into ruin. That sudden shattering of evil's stronghold is a triumph of stage machinery, but, like so many other things upon the stage, it does not happen in real life. In real life great gains are made slowly.

In real life Nero sits on the throne and Paul languishes in prison, and many years must pass before people begin calling their dogs Nero and their sons Paul, but that time comes. As God lives, that time will always come.

For the kind of patience which can carry a man through to a great finish in his personal life and in his social devotions is founded on religious faith. That this universe is fundamentally a moral order, that there are reason and purpose in it, that what ought to be done can be done, that, as Carlyle cried, "No lie can live forever"—these are religious convictions which undergirdle men to carry on when carrying on is hard.

As for personal experience, to what triumphant endings has religious faith brought multitudes who

have understood its power! If ever any one had a difficult conclusion to face, it was Jesus. Yet if he had given up in Gethsemane, unable to finish, all his teaching would have been forgotten, his works of mercy would have dropped into oblivion, and the life divine would have been wasted. His victory lay in his power to say on Calvary, "It is finished." If ever a man might have been tempted to give up, it was Paul. Yet if in Nero's prison he had collapsed, unable to finish, all his fine start on the Damascus Road would have gone for nothing and his long and arduous labor would have lost its fruit. The significance of his life hung on his ability at last to say, "I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

Indeed, through the power of vital religion, not simply the naturally strong and well-equipped, but the unpromising and feeble win through to a fine conclusion. Bunyan was right when, bringing his victorious company of pilgrims to the gates of the Celestial City, he numbered among them, not simply Great-heart, Valiant-for-truth, Honest, and Stand-fast, but also Mr. Feeble-mind, Mr. Ready-to-halt, Mr. Despondency, and his daughter, Much-afraid. They, too, had been given the power to see it through.

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